In partnership with First Nations

First Nations Forestry Program

SUCCESS STORIES

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Canada

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SUCCESS STORIES

Foreword

For centuries, Canada's forests have supported our economy and society, and they continue to do so today—particularly for First Nations communities for whom the forest plays a central role in their spiritual, cultural and economic lives.

Since 1996, the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has funded some 1,700 projects. Supported by Natural Resources Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, its goal has been to improve economic opportunities in status First Nations communities, with full consideration of the principles of sustainable forest management. These partnerships among First Nations, the Government of Canada, the forest sector and provincial and territorial governments have created opportunities for more than 450 communities across Canada to improve their skills and apply forward-looking management practices to the forest resource.

These success stories demonstrate how the Government of Canada is supporting wise stewardship, skills development, innovation and entrepreneurship in First Nations communities. They also bear witness to how First Nations people, through the FNFP, are seizing the many growing opportunities in forestry to improve the quality of life in their communities.

The FNFP builds on the Government of Canada's commitment to ensuring a clean, healthy environment while working with First Nations to build a better future and stronger communities.

The Honourable R. John Efford
Minister of Natural Resources

The Honourable Andy Scott
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

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About the First Nations Forestry Program

The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) is a jointly funded initiative of Natural Resources Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. It was launched in 1996 and is the primary federal program aimed at building First Nations capacity and technical skills to manage forests sustainably. It also positions communities to participate in, and benefit from, on- and off-reserve forest-based development opportunities.

Since 1996, the FNFP has funded some 1,700 projects valued at $137 million in over 450 communities across Canada. The partnership between First Nations, the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and the forest industry has provided opportunities for some 6,000 First Nations people to gain work experience on projects to improve their skills and capacity in sustainable forest management, and to increase their participation in Canada's forest sector. The FNFP builds upon the Government of Canada's commitments to ensure a clean, healthy environment and to create and share opportunities with First Nations to build a better future and stronger communities.

Program Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the First Nations Forestry Program is to improve the economic conditions in status First Nations communities with full consideration of the principles of sustainable forest management.

The following four objectives provide the framework to meet the program's purpose:

- to enhance the capacity of First Nations to manage their forest lands sustainably;
- to enhance the capacity of First Nations to operate and participate in forest-based development opportunities and their benefits;
- to advance the knowledge of First Nations in sustainable forest management and forest-based development; and
- to enhance the institutional capacity of First Nations at the provincial and territorial level to support their participation in the forest-based economy.

Project Profiles

The FNFP projects reported on in this compendium represent First Nations accomplishments in various forest-related activities across Canada. Each project has qualities that make it unique in its own right. Most importantly, they provide examples of specific activities that may be of value to First Nations who wish to develop similar projects or who wish to gain some insight into forest-related endeavours and opportunities. Each story provides the name of a contact person for those interested in following up for further information.

Category

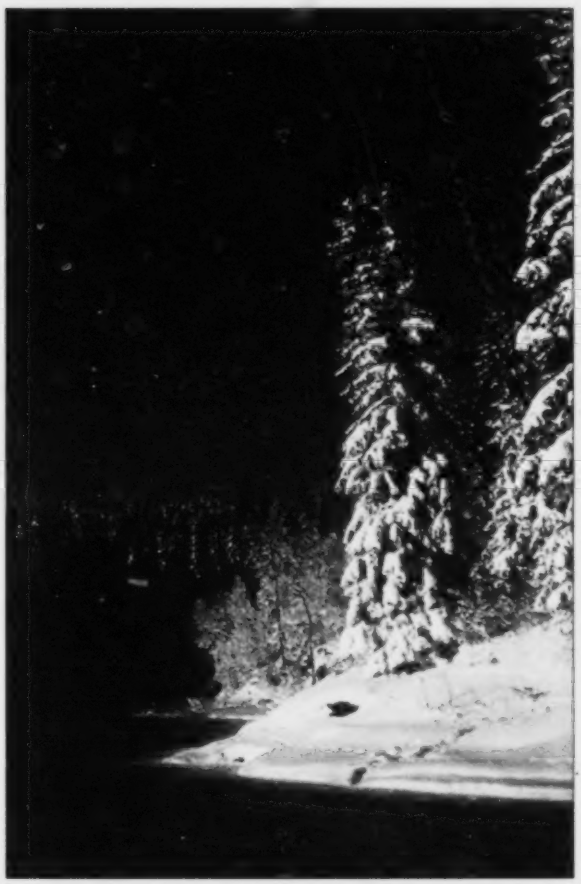
Forest Manageme

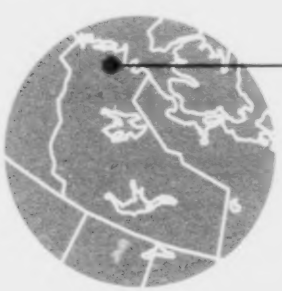
Gwich'in Tribal Council, Northwest Territories

Educational toolkits help teach forest management

As the Mackenzie River flows from the headwaters of the Peace and Athabasca Rivers, it heads north toward the Arctic Circle. The mighty river's relatively warm waters support a band of boreal forest all the way to the great north Mackenzie Delta, east of the Richardson Mountains. The forested valley covers 12,710 square kilometres and is home to several small towns, including Inuvik, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Fort McPherson. All are within the Gwich'in Settlement Area (GSA).

Although it is located above the treeline of the Arctic Circle, the GSA's traditional territory features a unique ecosystem. Most land north of 60 degrees is permanently frozen earth or permafrost and can support only stunted trees and shrub vegetation. However, thanks to the influence of the Mackenzie River, the GSA is home to a large boreal forest. Indigenous people from the Gwich'in and Déné Nations have respected and relied on this renewable resource for centuries.





Gwich'in Tribal Council

In the past decade, the GSA has carried out a number of land-use studies to track the status of its forests. It planned to use the studies to determine the best way to manage the region's natural resources. Now, with the results from its research complete, the Gwich'in Tribal Council and the Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board (GRRB) want to share what they have learned about these forests. With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), it is creating an educational toolkit.

"We've created some teaching tools to help young people gain an understanding of how the community and the forests are interdependent," says Jennifer Walker-Larsen, an ecologist with the GRRB. "With the support of the FNFP, we've been able to work with an educational specialist to write the material and design classroom activities."

The toolkit is designed for students in grades 7 to 9. It features a teacher's backgrounder, lesson samples, activity sheets and handouts. There are also recommendations for field observations.

Concepts covered in the toolkit include general forest ecology, forest regeneration and re-growth following forest disturbances. The kit also highlights the significance of traditional forest uses.

"We hope that the toolkits will be used for years to come in a variety of teaching settings," says Jennifer. "They will be incorporated in our presentations at schools and at summer science camps. We also plan to make the student activities available during our 'Nature Day' events."

By encouraging Gwich'in youth to understand and appreciate regional forests, the Gwich'in Tribal Council is advocating a healthy environment for its people.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$10,000
First Nations Funds	$7,600
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$17,600**

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Driftpile First Nation, Alberta

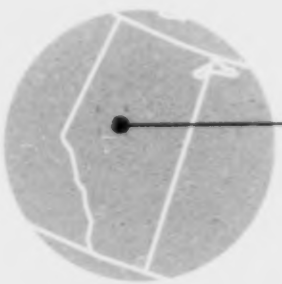
Planting the seeds of a promising future

The Driftpile First Nation of northern Alberta has long recognized the benefits that come with a healthy and productive woodland region. In fact, more than 20 years ago, far-sighted Driftpile leaders set aside part of the community's woodland area specifically for silviculture activities. Over the years, their decision to maintain and manage a woodland-designated area has benefited all members of the Driftpile First Nation.

The Driftpile First Nation is located about 50 kilometres east of High Prairie and 72 kilometres west of Slave Lake. The reserve, bordering the south shore of Lesser Slave Lake, covers some 6,349 hectares. About 30 percent of that area is forest. For the 1,200 members who live in the community (out of a total population of 2,200), the forest industry is a key part of the local economy.

To ensure that future generations will also benefit from a healthy woodland region, the community has adopted a five-year plan to upgrade its forest resources. As part of that plan, the Driftpile First Nation planted 40,000 coniferous trees in an area severely damaged by a forest fire in 2001. Supporting the replanting program were the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), which provided financial assistance, and Alberta Plywood Ltd., which provided the trees and technical assistance.

"The decision to replant the forest fire site was a special one for the entire community," says band member Peter Freeman. "The fire was started accidentally," he explains. "The area had been forested years before and was well into a replanting program when a band member, there to check the progress of the replanting, accidentally started the fire."



Driftpile First Nation

Some 48,000 seedlings, mostly three to four years old, were destroyed. For a community that prides itself on the protection and preservation of its resources, the forest fire was a harsh blow. However, thanks in large part to the support of the FNFP, that blow has been softened considerably.

"Replanting the site of the forest fire put us back on track," says Peter. "We're well into our five-year plan of harvesting older trees, thinning areas where the fire hazard is high and planting quality seedlings (mainly spruce and some pine) to ensure the stability of our forest resources." To date, the band has planted more than 700,000 seedlings. Some of those have since been removed to promote the growth and health of the remaining trees.

"The economic benefits of this tree planting initiative will be felt for generations," says Peter. "It will enable us to carry on the valuable silviculture activities that have served this community so well over the past two decades."

While the economic benefits are welcome, it appears that the cultural and social benefits may last even longer. That's because several younger members of the Driftpile First Nation stepped forward to help in the regeneration program. "With the help of the FNFP, we were able to hire 11 youth," says Peter. "The experience they gained in this vital component of silviculture means we'll always have the expertise we need to protect and preserve our forest resources."

Many of these young people, as well as other youth in the community, have found work with tree planting firms in the area. Still others, says Peter, have enrolled in schools that specialize in forest management.

"The skills they acquire will strengthen our industry even more in the future."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$39,400
First Nation Funds	$22,000
Other Funds	$1,000
Total	**$62,400**

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Huron-Wendat First Nation, Quebec

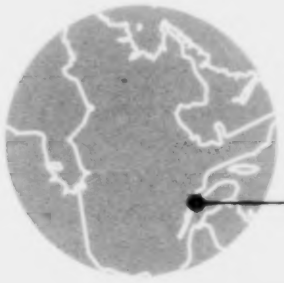
Strengthening its historical links to the forest

Although the Huron-Wendat community has evolved into what is often described as a small city, the band's 1,700 members have retained their strong attachment to their land and environment.

The reserve, located about 20 kilometres north-west of Québec City, is actually a suburb of the province's capital city. However, the land remains rich in natural resources. And the years have only strengthened the band members' appreciation for the forests and wildlife that make up their traditional lands.

The Huron-Wendat's efforts to share and preserve its resources, as well as its culture, began in 1987. That's when the Government of Quebec and the Huron-Wendat Band Council signed a co-management agreement covering fishing and hunting in a 400 square kilometre forest territory called Tourilli. Since 1999, the Huron-Wendat First Nation has worked hand in hand with the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) to identify the best way to take advantage of Tourilli's natural resources. Specifically, the FNFP's financial support enabled the band to develop an integrated resource management and practices approach based on wildlife needs.

Tourilli sits at the junction of the coniferous boreal forest and the broadleaf-conifer mix of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence forest. The area, characterized



Huron-Wendat First Nation

by abundant balsam fir, spruce and birch, is one of the most diverse in the province. "We are located in the boreal shield system," explains Louis Lesage, the band's point man in dealing with the FNFP. "As a result, we have a wide variety of animals, from moose, wolves, black bears and deer to loons and various species of waterfowl."

Tourilli is also widely acknowledged for its fine fishing. "In fact," says Louis, "it's known as the best place in the region for brook char and Arctic char." He says the area's reputation for fishing, as well as its thriving diversity, is the result of years of careful management and conservative harvesting.

The Huron-Wendat band members naturally want this exceptional mix of vegetation and wildlife to remain protected. At the same time, they recognize that there are economic advantages to making their forest resources available to others. "Simply put, we want to share our exceptional resources, as well as our love of nature and the environment, with others," says Louis. To that end, he says, the band has developed ecotourism activities for all four seasons. They even offer a traditional menu for those who truly want to live the Huron experience.

"It's important that we achieve just the right balance," says Louis. "That's why, with the financial support of the FNFP, we're attempting to put together a viable and long-term forest management plan for our territory." Such a plan, he points out, would enrich the community, both culturally and economically. And it would give the Huron-Wendat a greater voice in protecting and managing their forest resources.

The next step for the Huron-Wendat First Nation, says Louis, is building on what it has learned. The band will then apply that knowledge to create a viable industry for the community and new employment opportunities for its members.

"At the same time," says Louis, "we want to ensure that we move forward in a way that respects our environment and culture."

The community's culture, he points out, has enabled the Huron-Wendat to survive and evolve over the centuries while conserving and affirming their identity. "Our distinctive agriculture, food, society, homes, commercial sense and mythology continue to enrich the Huron-Wendat First Nation to this day."

Clearly, for the Huron-Wendat, a nation proud of its roots, its culture and its history, there will be no compromise when planning its future.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$73,400
First Nation Funds	$259,000
Other Funds	$1,035,400
Total	**$1,367,800**

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Eel Ground First Nation, New Brunswick

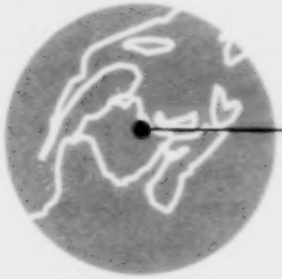
Forest management activities revive local forests

In the mid-1990s, Forestry Development Officer Steve Ginnish set out to restore the natural resources on the Eel Ground First Nation reserve near Miramichi. Heavy cutting had taken a severe toll on the boreal forest on the north shore of New Brunswick.

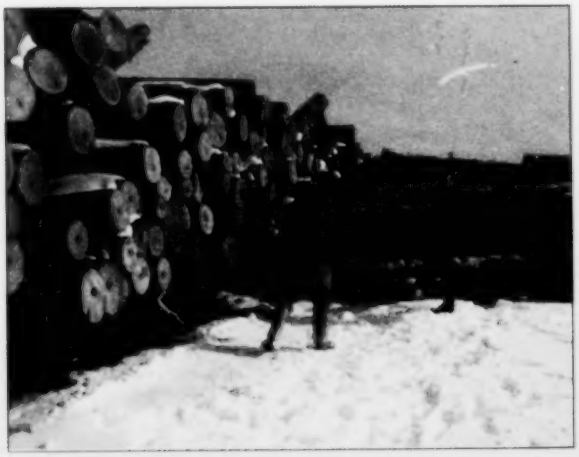
Recognizing that Steve was, in fact, planting the seeds for future economic growth, the Eel Ground community rallied behind his efforts to regenerate the forest. As a result of its decision to work with Steve, the band's approach to stewardship has progressed significantly in recent years. Today, the community's forestry practices meet both modern technical requirements and environmental legislation. Working with Brian Donovan, a New Brunswick forestry consultant, the band has tailored its silvicultural techniques to suit its reserve land. These techniques include residue removal, pre-commercial thinning, planting, mapping and soil conservation practices.

"The forest has many values for the people of Eel Ground—economically, culturally, spiritually and historically," says Steve. "We have to balance all of these factors in a sustainable way. Our reserve sits near some large forest industry operations, such as a UPM Kymmene plant, and we need to ensure that our resources are managed properly."

The Eel Ground First Nation is now taking another major step forward to protect its resources. The band is seeking certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), an international organization that promotes sustainable forest development. The FSC certification would be the latest in a series of endorsements for the band's efforts. The Canadian Institute of Forestry, the New Brunswick Conservation Council, and the Environmental Network of Canada have all acknowledged the success of Eel Ground's forest management plan.



Eel Ground First Nation



"We are about to undergo our final assessment in the FSC certification procedure," says Steve. A team from Brussels was scheduled to arrive in the spring of 2005 for an eight-day tour of the band's land and office. Noting that they had made all the adjustments recommended in earlier assessments, the community was confident it would pass the final stage.

Still, reaching the final phase of certification has been a long and complex process. The project was first organized under the federal-provincial Forest Resource Development Agreement (1982-1995). The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has partly funded the project since 1996, providing a total of $67,400 in assistance between 1996 and 2005.

"We needed a whole new approach for land base management," says Steve. "The fact is, we could not have pursued these goals without support from the FNFP."

He points out that Eel Ground's forest management initiatives have already produced a number of spin-off benefits, most notably employment opportunities. The band's forest program covers ecological knowledge, medicinal plant protection, research, map production and sawmill operations. These activities support jobs for 45 seasonal workers and six full-time staff members.

FSC certification will advance this process, he says. It will bring an excellent marketing advantage to Eel Ground's business and encourage other Maritimes First Nations to develop sustainable forestry plans.

"We're working to improve the standards—and the participation—of Aboriginal-owned developments in the forest industry," says Steve. "The effort we put in now will pay off for many years to come."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$67,400
First Nation Funds	$67,000
Other Funds	$96,000
Total	**$230,400**

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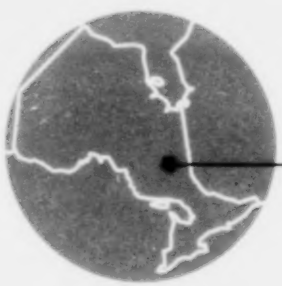
Mattagami First Nation, Ontario

First Nation envisions community-based development of natural resources

The clay belt ecozone covers much of northeastern Ontario. Starting north of Hearst, it stretches to the Quebec border and south to Matheson, near Kirkland Lake. The clay belt's forests are rooted in rich clay deposits, laid down by the glacial waters of Lake Barlow-Ojibway in the north. Vast stands of black spruce thrive in the humid boreal climate, creating an ideal habitat for wildlife such as moose, partridge, wolf, fox, lynx, hawk, eagle, marten, mink, weasel and black bear.

The lowland forests of the clay belt are especially known for their lengthy forest fire cycles. In some areas, stands of forest have stood for more than 700 years without fire. These unusual cycles are the focus of much research. Aboriginal perspectives and traditional knowledge, in particular, are prompting many to reconsider how to work with clay belt forests.



Mattagami First Nation

The lowland forests of the clay belt are especially known for their lengthy forest fire cycles. In some areas, stands of forest have stood for more than 700 years without fire.

In 1992, the Canadian Forest Service established the clay belt's Lake Abitibi Model Forest (LAMF). Its goal was to build partnerships, generate new ideas and create on-the-ground tools for sustainable forest management. Since its launch, the LAMF has conducted many studies in forests near the Mattagami First Nation along Mattagami Lake. The First Nation's 5,241-hectare forested land base is located 95 kilometres south of Timmins and is accessible by Highway 144.

"Our partnership with the LAMF and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources was a perfect fit for the Mattagami First Nation," says Chris McKay, a forestry planner with the Gawuhigaewin Community Development Corporation. With support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), two band members completed four months of field work surveys as part of a large research initiative to examine the effects of partial harvesting techniques.

"Provincial forestry planners are looking at more environmentally friendly harvest methods," says Chris. "Our surveying assessed the outcome of a 10-year partial harvest trial. By contributing to the project, we've gained valuable training that will be vital to future projects."

More specifically, the band acquired expertise in Harvesting with Regeneration Protection (HARP), a unique harvesting method that protects older trees at some sites. HARP results in an uneven-aged forest, which imitates and takes advantage of natural processes in older lowland black spruce stands.

With this research project complete, and with the benefit of added forest management experience, the Mattagami First Nation is perfectly positioned to consider new, innovative approaches to working with local natural resources.

"We have many ideas for integrating our traditional knowledge and forest values with modern Geographic Information System (GIS) technology," says Chris. "We're also exploring possibilities for value-added forest products and non-timber forest uses. Besides, ecotourism in our part of the province is gaining momentum. We'd like to be part of that trend."

The Mattagami First Nation hopes its successful partnerships with government and industry groups will continue as the community strives to secure a viable, prosperous future.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$17,000
First Nation Funds	$2,500
Other Funds	$40,500
Total	**$60,000**

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Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, Newfoundland and Labrador

First Nation studies variable retention techniques

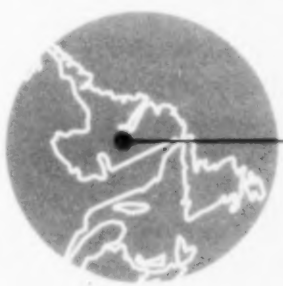
The Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation is becoming more involved in managing the forests near its community in east central Labrador. Working closely with the federal and provincial governments, the band is studying the environmental impact of different silvicultural practices on the forest. Specifically, a research team is collecting data on a 250-hectare area scheduled for harvest next year.

"This winter, we're tracking wildlife and other features of the landscape," says Valerie Courtois, a Forestry Planner from the Innu Nation. "We want to monitor the properties of the forest before and after each cutting pattern. This way we can choose the most appropriate—and the least disruptive—harvest method for the future."

Assisting the community-led effort is Neal Simon, a Regional Ecologist with the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources. Simon has undertaken a PhD research project in the same area. His study has three years' worth of data on vegetation and songbird counts in the area. The Innu will build on this research by gathering habitat details of other animals and game birds, such as rabbit, martin, weasel and porcupine. These animals are significant for the Innu people.

The project has made good progress since it started in December 2004, says Valerie. The first round of harvesting is scheduled to begin this summer and will lead to another round of research next winter. Monitoring is best completed in the winter, she adds, because researchers can observe an animal's habits by tracking its prints in the snow.

"Five band members have been hired to record data using a Geographical Information System (GIS) database. These jobs are very important for



Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation

our community—they are giving our people a chance to learn about modern land-use research while also teaching the Innu a way of life."

Band member and locally recognized hunting expert, Jean-Pierre Ashini, was chosen to lead the field study. On his hiking and camping trips through the forest, Jean-Pierre trains younger band members to recognize wildlife patterns and habitats. His work has gained respect and recognition in the Innu community, as has his ability to connect with youth. Valerie says Jean-Pierre's work has also had a social benefit, noting that two young people in the community have accompanied him on his trips.

"They spent time in the woods where they could clear their minds and learn about the forest and our forest traditions in a holistic way," says Valerie. "This sharing of knowledge is important to continue the way our people live and work with natural resources."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$25,000
First Nation Funds	$8,700
Other Funds	$9,000
Total	**$42,700**

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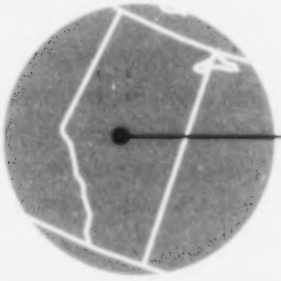
Piikani Nation, Alberta

Inventory and logging plan helps monitor forest health

The forest inventory and logging plan developed by the Piikani Nation in southern Alberta serves two important purposes—it fosters the best forest management practices and it helps monitor the dreaded infiltration of the mountain pine beetle (MPB) into the foothills of southwest Alberta.

The MPB infestations of lodgepole pine trees in British Columbia and northern Alberta have increased steadily in the last decade, causing much hardship for the forest industry. In response to the epidemic, governments have partnered with industry and First Nations to monitor outbreaks and limit the damage incurred. Recently, alarming reports have surfaced of the MPB spreading to the southern Alberta foothills. The Piikani Nation, located in the heart of this region, is committed to doing its part, joining an area-wide project to survey for the presence of the MPB.

Situated about 50 kilometres west of Lethbridge, the Piikani Nation occupies 42,612 hectares of land between the towns of Pincher Creek and Fort MacLeod. The reserve's diverse landscape is made up of forests, alpine slopes and grasslands. Common tree species include Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce and western white pine.



"With respect to the MPB, we've been fortunate so far," says Tobias Provost, a project manager at the Piikani Nation's band office. "The survey found that, while the pine beetle may be at our doorstep, it is not yet present in our forests." He says the band will continue monitoring its forests and is fully prepared to work with its neighbours should the MPB make an appearance.

In the meantime, the band is moving forward on the second goal in its forest inventory and logging plan. Working in partnership with the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) and Timberline Forest Inventory Consultants Ltd. of Edmonton, it presented a detailed logging proposal to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs in November 2004. The plan recommended the harvesting of 30,000 cubic metres over five years at a rate of 5,000 cubic metres per year. Harvesting in approved areas began in the winter of 2005.

"Our long-term goal is to create opportunities for our community using the forest-based resources on our reserve," says Tobias. "There were many steps involved with developing the logging plan. We had to identify what parts of the land were most suited for logging and what areas should be protected."

Tobias explains that the pre-harvest assessments looked at many characteristics of the forests, such as the quality and quantity of trees, other types of vegetation, and soil. While the band took stock of what timber would be available for harvest, it also examined the trees for any sign of the MPB. The surveying was completed in July 2004 with the help of Timberline Forest Inventory Consultants.

Timberline's Derrick Lalonde said the field work went smoothly and provided training for Piikani Nation members. "We set up a team of eight people—four from Piikani and four from Timberline—which allowed for one-to-one training," he explains. "We took an inventory of wood volumes and gathered data on trees in the region. We needed to find out exactly what areas were suitable for harvesting so we completed a pre-harvest ecological assessment."

Timberline will continue its work with the Piikani Nation, Derrick reports. The current logging plan allows for harvesting over the next three years. During this time, Piikani and Timberline hope to develop a long-term forest management strategy for the region.

Meanwhile, members of the Piikani Nation will keep a close eye on the MPB. "We'll be hoping for extremely cold weather—something the mountain pine beetle doesn't like—in the next few years," says Tobias.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$37,500
First Nation Funds	$15,100
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$52,600**

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Pabineau and St. Mary's First Nations, New Brunswick

First Nations explore new direction for forest management

A new sustainable forest management plan is helping the Pabineau and St. Mary's First Nations of New Brunswick determine the best way to manage their forest resources.

The two reserves are part of a unique ecological region known as the Acadian Forest. The surrounding area consists of mixed wood tree stands, featuring northern hardwoods such as maple and beech. Softwoods in the area include spruce and balsam fir trees. The topography ranges from the southern rolling hills to the steeper highlands in the north.

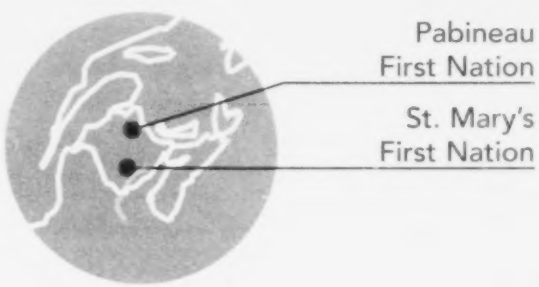
Brian Donovan of New Brunswick's Forest Financial Consulting presented the new forest management plan for this unique area to the Band Councils. The plan outlines the best way for the First Nations to create new economic opportunities while preserving their resources for future generations.

Brian worked closely with both bands to arrive at the most effective plan. He met with the Band Councils to review current forest management practices and to determine parameters to guide future plans. Both First Nations made it clear that, while they wanted to create business opportunities, they were committed to preserving the traditional uses of the 1,000-hectare forest.

In preparing the plan, the first task was to gather a complete and accurate forest inventory. "We trained members from St. Mary's and Pabineau to measure trees, identify unique plants and take note of native medicinal plants," says Brian. "At the same time, we taught them to understand cut line and boundary line maintenance, and we arranged boundaries and buffer zones for sensitive areas." For example, the Pabineau Nation identified a historical gravesite in its forest that it did not want disturbed.

In the summer of 2003, the consultants began field work with three band members from each of the two communities. The group visited sample areas of the forest, studying tree and vegetation characteristics and wildlife properties. They also collected information for a Geographical Information System (GIS) database.

Once the field work was completed, the consultants presented the First Nations with new possibilities for working with forest resources—



options that would generate community employment and business opportunities. For instance, the land base survey had identified certain forest areas suitable for pre-commercial thinning, fill planting and selective harvesting.

"Now that the Chiefs and Councils have a GIS-based management system, they can decide on goals for the years ahead," says Brian. Since the forest inventory research, three band members have been hired to manage routine duties, such as boundary line maintenance. They will be able to use their training for ongoing seasonal work.

Aside from commercial harvesting, there are other untapped forest uses available to the First Nations. For example, St. Mary's reserve is close to parks along Killarney Lake. "Ecotourism ventures could fare well in the area," says Brian. In addition, blueberries are plentiful on the Pabineau reserve, opening the door for commercial sales.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$66,900
First Nations Funds	$23,900
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$90,800**

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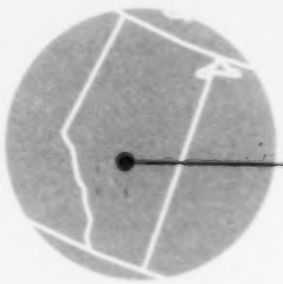
Alexander First Nation, Alberta

Program ensures healthy economy and environment

While Alexander First Nation is made up of three distinct areas, it has long viewed its lands near Fox Creek, about 55 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, as some of the most promising in terms of a future based on forest resources. However, as keen as the band was for its members to realize the economic benefits of a forest-based economy, it did not want to proceed if it put the area's natural resources at risk.

With $10,000 in assistance from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Alexander band has put together a comprehensive plan to map, catalogue and manage the forest resources on the 2,080 hectares that make up the Fox Creek area. As a result of that decision, it is putting together an effective forest management strategy—one that is enabling the community to fully participate in the forest industry while ensuring long-term growth and sustainability.



Alexander First Nation

The Alexander First Nation had several goals in mind when it approached the FNFP for help in developing its forest management strategy, says a band member. "We wanted to protect the environment, preserve culturally sensitive areas and create short- and long-term employment and business opportunities."

"Ultimately," the band spokesperson added, "we hoped to gain economic self-sufficiency through a forest-based economy. But we wanted to do so without putting the future of the forest at risk."

To ensure that the objectives identified in the strategy were fully met, the Alexander Band entered into a co-management agreement with Silvacom Ltd., a natural resource management consulting company with extensive experience in forest engineering. Blue Ridge Lumber Inc., an Alberta-based company, was brought aboard to manage the area until August 31, 2015. The forest management agreement grants the company the rights to establish, grow and harvest coniferous and deciduous timber on the forest area defined by this agreement.

Under the guidance of Silvacom, and with the assistance of Blue Ridge, the Alexander First Nation identified a need to thin the Fox Creek area and to carry out some replanting. To accomplish that task, the band employed eight members for a period of about four weeks. The equipment they required—quads, trucks, brush saws and power saws—were provided by the band's own forestry department. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada also chipped in, providing support and disease control expertise to help the band deal with the threat of an insect infestation.

Employing band members to prepare the site for resource development was only the beginning. The agreement calls for Blue Ridge to hire band members on a permanent basis once the production of timber and forest-related products begins in earnest.

"The FNFP's participation in the preparation of a forest management strategy has been invaluable," says Kurt Burnstick of the band's forestry division. The Fox Creek lands are not geographically linked to the main reserve, and it would have been difficult for the Alexander First Nation to dedicate the resources to develop the area properly.

"The band recognizes that the Fox Creek area is a viable land resource," he explains, "but it is also our home." In the future, says Kurt, the Alexander Band will want to establish new communities in the Fox Creek reserve. "We want to make sure those communities and the forest industry live in harmony."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$10,000
First Nation Funds	$10,000
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$20,000**

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Chapleau Cree First Nation, Ontario

First Nation coordinator assesses forest management plans

Forest Management Coordinator Roxanne Metlin sees her job as a vital link between the Chapleau Cree First Nation and the government and industry planners who manage the area's forests.

Located in northwestern Ontario, about 350 kilometres northeast of Sault Ste. Marie, the Chapleau Cree reserve sits near the southern tip of Ontario's great boreal forest. The reserve, home to 908 band members, covers 8,050 hectares.

Two large forestry corporations are now developing plans for the region, says Roxanne, and the area's First Nations communities want to be involved in the process. "The Chapleau people have long-standing traditions connected to the local forests," she points out. "They want a voice in planning the future of those forests."

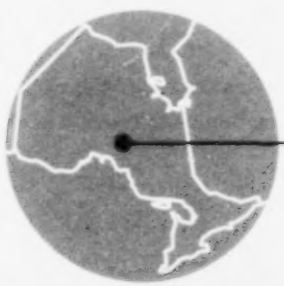
The two corporations are Domtar Inc., which has a licence for the Pineland-Martel Forest Unit (640,000 hectares), and Tembec Inc., which has a licence for the Superior Forest Unit (900,000 hectares). The primary tree species in the area are jack pine, white and black spruce, poplar and birch. Balsam fir, white pine and eastern white cedar trees also grow in the region.

Roxanne, who started her job in July 2004, describes her work so far as a successful pilot project. "There hasn't been a forest management position like this before and I can see that my work is already very valuable," she says.

Roxanne acts mainly as a liaison. She's responsible for bringing the important issues that her community raises to government and local companies. She coordinates efforts to ensure that the concerns of the Chapleau Cree are considered in decisions that affect the area's natural resources. She is also a member of the First Nations Task Team, an advisory group made up of representatives from each of the area's First Nations (Brunswick House, Chapleau Cree, Chapleau Ojibway, Mattagami and Missanabie Cree).

Roxanne spends a lot of her time researching, writing reports, consulting and organizing band meetings and information sessions. She schedules events so that band members can review drafts of local forest management plans. She says that these sessions give residents an opportunity to discuss their concerns, ask questions and talk with industry and government representatives.

Chapleau Cree Chief Wade Cachagee agrees that Roxanne's job is necessary to coordinate natural resource priorities. He says that the band's office has been overwhelmed by a large amount



Chapleau Cree First Nation

of procedural tasks and paperwork in recent years. Also, the band has many concerns about how to keep its connection to the forests as it becomes more involved in the forest industry.

For example, to help understand how the forest is being affected by industry, the band keeps track of tree harvest areas, trappers' cabins and traplines, baitfish harvest areas, licence fees and work permits.

"In the past, we haven't had the means to deal with all of the issues that we should be involved in," he says. "There hasn't been time or a dedicated person to do the work. Support from the First Nations Forestry Program allowed us to hire a band member to follow the issues and be at the table when forest management plans are negotiated." He says he hopes the position will be in place next year "so we can continue our efforts."

Pat Tangy, an official with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources who works with Roxanne, shares that hope. She says the fact that they can work together has allowed local First Nations communities to have more input into new forestry activities.

"There should be more investment in staff positions like this one," says Pat. "Roxanne's work has been extensive and is very helpful. She sits on several advisory committees and offers a lot of help in preparing background reports on views and traditions held by the Chapleau Cree First Nation."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$18,000
First Nation Funds	$20,500
Other Funds	$4,000
Total	**$42,500**

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Kapawe'no First Nation, Alberta

Fire prevention plan a collaborative effort

Although no forestry activities are conducted on its land, the Kapawe'no First Nation of northern Alberta is still affected by the forest industry. Located near High Prairie, on the western corner of Lesser Slave Lake, the Kapawe'no First Nation is surrounded by forestry operations. In fact, many band members have found employment with forest-based firms in the area.

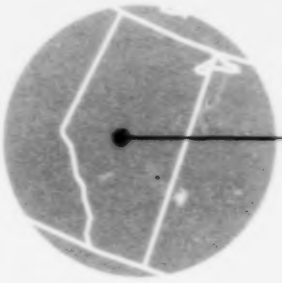
Unfortunately, the Kapawe'no are also subject to the dangers that come with living in a heavily forested area. "Fire is always a concern," says band manager George Addai, "whether natural or caused by human error. That's why we decided it was necessary to put together a fire control and prevention plan to protect the community."

Called the FireSmart plan, the fire prevention and control strategy is a collaborative effort, the result of band representatives working hand in hand with officials from forest companies, the District of Big Lakes and Alberta's Department of Sustainable Resources. The process that produced the plan was supported by the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP).

"The financial assistance made available by the FNFP enabled us to complete Phase I of this project successfully," says George. "Through the FireSmart plan, we've been able to outline the fire threat to reserve lands and to determine the measures we need to protect them."

With the support and cooperation of the Department of Sustainable Resources, the band acquired aerial photography of its lands and put together a computer simulation to determine the degree of fire hazard. Planning was based on information from the Alberta Vegetation Inventory, as well as fire weather, seasonal weather patterns and natural and anthropogenic features.

"By identifying the hazards, we've been able to come up with a plan to mitigate those threats," says George. Although he's quick to credit band members for buying into the need for a plan, he acknowledges that not all were as willing to accept the measures the plan calls for. "For example, many of the trees in the community act as dust barriers. Removing them would reduce the fire hazard but it would also increase the problem of dust. Those are the kinds of things we'll want to assess further before moving on to Phase II of the project."



No matter what measures are adopted, it's already clear that the FireSmart plan will have a significant—and hugely beneficial—impact on the Kapawe'no community in the coming years. "The FireSmart plan not only increased the security of the Kapawe'no First Nation, "says George, "but it also provided a welcome boost to the economy." Wherever practical and whenever possible, band members were employed in the project.

George hopes that will also be the case in Phase II of the project—implementing the measures identified in the initial phase. "No matter what the future brings," he says, "I know we'll continue to be able to count on the support of the forest industry and the Department of Sustainable Resources in this initiative."

The Department of Sustainable Resources was especially helpful in Phase I, George adds. "And they've indicated that we can expect the same kind of cooperation when we begin to implement all of the steps required to complete this project."

And that makes the 270 band members who make up the Kapawe'no First Nation feel just a bit safer.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$15,000
First Nation Funds	$7,500
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$22,500**

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Category 2:

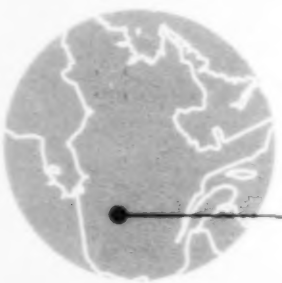
Building Skills and Professional Development

Abitibiwinni First Nation, Quebec

Skills and training key to First Nation's future in forestry

For generations, trapping was the single most important economic activity for the residents of the Abitibiwinni First Nation in Quebec. Today, while trapping is still very much a part of this Algonquin community, also known as Pikogan, forestry and mining are creating exciting new economic opportunities for the 800 members (480 on-reserve). Forestry, in particular, holds the promise of new jobs and long-term economic stability for the community, located 3 kilometres north of Amos and 115 kilometres from the Ontario border.

Since 2000, the responsibility for balancing the needs of trappers with those of the forest industry, while ensuring that the band's forest resources are preserved for future generations, has rested with the Abitibiwinni First Nation Forestry Department. The head of the Forestry Department, Benoit Croteau, says the key to the successful development of the forest resources is harmonizing land use planning with traditional knowledge. "This," he says, "will ensure traditional land use is always a priority in our resource development plans."



Abitibiwinni First Nation

Another priority, of course, is making sure that community members have the opportunity to acquire the training and develop the skills they need to participate fully in a forest-based economy. That, says Benoit, requires that his department carry out its forest management planning in step with its ongoing harmonization activities. The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has supported the Pikogan in these efforts for several years. The Forestry Department also receives support for its management and harmonization activities from the Forestry Territory Development Program (Ministère des Ressources naturelles, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec).

While the band's forest management plan covers only 94 hectares—just a fraction of the reserve's area—the land is exceptionally rich in natural resources. It has an abundant supply of aspen, poplar and white birch, and is home to a wide range of wildlife, including moose, black bear, wolves, woodland caribou, hares and partridge.

According to Benoit, the area is ideal for both trapping and forestry, making harmonization efforts a priority. So much so that the department has appointed James Cananasso to make sure all community participants are aware of forest development, infrastructure plans and projects. "It's important," says Benoit, "that the community understands the impact that forestry development can have on traditional activities."

Aside from harmonization, the overriding goal of the band's forest management activities is to ensure that the Algonquin Abitibiwinni community has the capacity to participate successfully in the forest industry. "We are committed to becoming more autonomous, to providing the members of our community with the training they need on an ongoing basis," Benoît says. "For example, one new training initiative, introduced with the financial support of the FNFP, is to provide community members with training in the area of pre-commercial thinning. If we are to be competitive with other industry players, we must be prepared to continually upgrade the skills of our workforce."

Through their participation in the forest companies' activities, close to 30 band members are already acquiring valuable first-hand experience. Three, in fact, are employed on a permanent basis while another 13 or 14 work on a temporary basis.

Even though the Abitibiwinni First Nation focuses on training and development for its members, it is keeping pace with the needs of today's forest industry. The forestry department offers the community and surrounding area a Geographic Information System (GIS), Global Positioning System (GPS), Spatial Reference Information System, 3-D viewing system, and general cartography services. Benoît credits the ongoing assistance of the FNFP, as well as the many partnerships that the forestry department has developed with regional partners such as Tembec Inc., the James Bay Development Society, ecological groups, and the Ministère des Ressources naturelles, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec.

"The future looks bright," says Benoît, "and a brighter future means more opportunities and greater job stability for the members of our community."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$38,400
First Nation Funds	$47,100
Other Funds	$132,800
Total	**$218,300**

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Bigstone Cree Nation, Alberta

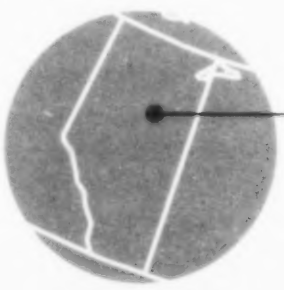
Inventory project measures up to expectations

By any measure, the timber inventory project carried out by the Bigstone Cree Nation of Alberta since 2003 has been successful. The Nation's 2005 Forest Management Plan, of which timber inventory was the key component, has given community leaders the information they need to make informed decisions for effective forest management in the future.

"For example," says band member and Project Manager, Clifford W. Starr, "local personnel can now calculate a sustainable annual allowable cut using annual growth data. Providing harvest potential measures allows for the management of scarce resources." He says the financial assistance of the First Nations Forestry Program and the support of the Bigstone Cree Nation made that kind of progress possible.

Updating the timber inventory component of the plan has enabled the band to compute the land's mean annual increment (growth rate) and its potential harvest volumes, says Clifford. "And that gives the Nation's administration the data it needs to develop an annual operating plan, one that's best for our community today and in the future."

An effective Forest Management Plan is particularly important to the Bigstone Cree Nation. Located near the Town of Slave Lake, the band's population of 5,800 is spread among several small communities, covering a vast forested area of northern Alberta. Lands surrounding the reserve are subject to heavy, annual exploration from the many oil and gas companies in the area. As a result, says Clifford, reserve lands have inevitably been subjected to exploratory projects. While the future of such activities is now being negotiated, they have already had an impact on reserve lands. In addition, reserve lands have felt the stress of activities related to exploration, such as additional housing, road development, the expansion of infrastructure sites and a variety of public works related projects.



"No doubt, exploration work by oil and gas companies will further alter the reserve landscape in the future," says Clifford. "But with a Forest Management Plan in place, the Chief and Council will be ideally positioned to consider all factors when making decisions in the area about proper land management." These decisions, he adds, will factor in the need for rehabilitative projects, such as reforesting old cutovers that originated from harvesting operations carried out in the early 1980s. Members of the Bigstone Cree Nation have made it clear they want their forest lands to be restored to their original condition, a goal fully supported by the Chief and Council.

Most affected by all that's happening on reserve lands is the largest single group in the Bigstone Cree Nation—the young people. While Bigstone youth provide much of the work force to surrounding industries, their potential for growth has been limited by education and pre-requisite requirements—they generally do not qualify for industry developed training models. The Nation's officials strongly believe that more opportunities will be available to youth, both on reserve land and in adjoining areas, through forestry training initiatives such as the timber inventory project.

It appears that is already the case, says Clifford. "Two of our participants, Charles Young and Josh Alook, have already enrolled in Forestry Technician programs at neighbouring colleges. When they complete the program, they will have the skills to supervise on-reserve forestry projects such as reforestation projects and regeneration surveys for local timber operators." They, and others who follow in their footsteps, will be able to conduct silvicultural surveys of old cutovers on the reserve's land base and play an active role in planning future harvesting operations.

"Role models like Charles and Josh represent our future," says Clifford, "but many people and organizations contributed to the success we've achieved to date. He says the Nation's officials were particularly grateful for the assistance of Geraldine Courtoreille, Raymond Auger, Jacy Alook and Darcy Bigstone, all Bigstone band members. Their participation was exemplary, he added, and demonstrates that talent and hard work are still the key ingredients in any effective plan.

The fact that the project was managed by a local firm, Pro-Starr Aboriginal Forestry Inc., not only helped two of the participants to go on to pursue diploma courses, but it also ensured that all participants received at least some baseline training. And that, says Clifford, means that the Bigstone Cree Nation is well positioned in the industry.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$55,800
First Nation Funds	$64,700
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$120,500**

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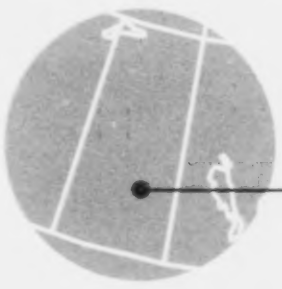
Day Star First Nation, Saskatchewan

Firefighting program provides skills and protects community

After a devastating forest fire destroyed 20 percent of the Day Star First Nation's reserve in the summer of 2000, community leaders rallied behind the idea of a local firefighter training program. The training would give band members valuable employment skills while providing protection for the 6,220-hectare reserve, located in east-central Saskatchewan, 85 kilometres northwest of Fort Qu'Appelle.

"At the time of the fire, we had no prevention program in place," explains Glen Kinequon, Training Program Manager. "The damage caused by the fire really hurt our community and threatened the local wildlife. We couldn't do anything to stop it. We just had to let it burn its course and hope for rain."

The tragedy spurred Day Star Chief Nelson Wright to seek outside assistance. He contacted the Prince Albert Grand Council and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) for help in developing a fire suppression training program. Thanks to their support, the program is now in its third year and 15 Day Star band members have been certified for basic-level firefighting. Another 12 band members were scheduled to receive training in 2005. All those certified are between the ages of 17 and 23.



Day Star First Nation

The training program runs for three weeks in the summer. Classroom sessions introduce the students to forest fire theory and provide important safety training such as First Aid and CPR. Moving outside of the classroom, students are trained to use fire suppression equipment. Finally, the students take part in field exercises. Glen says students are tested at various stages of the program as they earn different safety and equipment certifications.

Fire prevention methods are the main focus, he adds. Day Star trainees learn about proper tree cutting and clearing in areas at risk so they can keep wildfires from spreading.

In addition to the training, the Day Star band is erecting a fireguard—a protective barrier encircling the reserve's forested areas. The fireguard is 25 metres in width and covers 14.5 kilometres around the reserve's perimeter. In early 2005, the fireguard was 75 percent complete. Training program participants and supervisors are expanding the barrier and clearing any regenerated growth that may pose a risk. Any wood accumulated during the project is salvaged for firewood.

Saskatchewan has three categories of provincial firefighter certifications: Type 1, 2, and 3. Type 1 firefighters are the most experienced. They are on stand-by during the high-risk season and are the first to arrive at a fire. Type 2 firefighters assist Type 1 crews as needed. They are hired on seasonal contracts by the provincial government and are on call to join other crews when needed. Type 3 firefighters have basic firefighting skills and have learned chainsaw and brush clearing techniques. They are sometimes hired to clean up areas after a fire. The Day Star program focuses on Type 3 firefighter training.

Day Star leaders and the FSIN developed the course with financial support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP). Through the FSIN, the band hired two professional fire suppression trainers and one supervisor to instruct program participants. The instructors have more than 20 years of experience working in the dense boreal forests of northern Saskatchewan.

Owen Price, a provincial training officer with the Fire Management and Forest Protection Branch of Saskatchewan Environment, says the range of skills being offered to Day Star youth is impressive.

"It's good to see the youth in Day Star First Nation being trained by qualified, accredited instructors. That means they are learning practical skills for both forest fire protection and other forestry jobs."

In fact, Glen reports that five program graduates have gone on to accept contract jobs with forest companies in British Columbia. They work in specialized areas of forest management, such as brushing and clearing and forest regeneration.

"The FNFP's support is very important to our community," he says. "There is a great need for these types of projects, and we hope we can expand our efforts in the near future."

Glen points out that the training program has produced a wide range of benefits for the Day Star First Nation. "It offers protection for our reserve and it is a valuable source of training and employment. And the safety and equipment training, such as getting certified to use a chainsaw, is good background for finding jobs in the forest industry."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$15,000
First Nation Funds	$5,300
Other Funds	$1,000
Total	**$21,300**

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Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Saskatchewan

Fire Smart program protects a way of life

First Nations people have enjoyed the natural resources of northern Saskatchewan's Lac La Ronge region for centuries. Generations have fished the lakes and harvested the game that thrives in the thick boreal forest. Today, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band continues the area's rich Aboriginal history and culture. A new generation shares their appreciation for, and their understanding of, the area many call the Woodlands and Waterways.

The Lac La Ronge Indian Band consists of a number of smaller bands, covering an area of 43,302 hectares. Of the Band's total population of 6,828, about 4,100 members live on-reserve. Increasingly, they are seeking new opportunities to participate in the area's thriving forest industry.

But while the Band welcomes the employment opportunities and economic benefits of a forest-based economy, it also recognizes that human activity can increase the threat of forest fire. This is particularly significant to the Lac La Ronge Indian Band because of the high number of wild land fuels on the reserve.

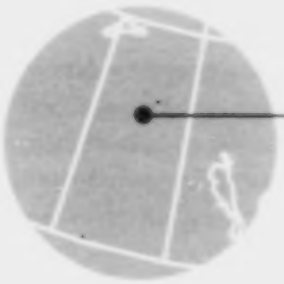
To protect its members and ensure their continuing participation in the area's forest industry, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band decided to create an extensive fire safety plan for its communities.

With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Band introduced its forest community Fire Smart program in May 2004. "Despite the occasional setback," says Lewis Layton, the Band's Director of Public Works and Housing, "most of our communities have now adopted the measures we outlined in our proposal to the FNFP." In other words, the fire safety program is now in effect.

Given the extensive forest growth on the reserves and the danger posed by wild land fuels in the area, the program is an especially comprehensive one.

"We began by assessing the ability of our communities to deal with wildfire threats," says Lewis. "We looked at each community's design and the location of its roads in terms of access. We examined the design of buildings, including roofing and landscaping. Then we determined the availability of water sources."

The program looked at each community's evacuation or emergency response plan closely and listed their available resources, such as



Lac La Ronge Indian Band

manpower and equipment. Resources outside of the community—those available through agencies, government or industry—were also compiled.

"We identified risk areas on the reserve," adds Lewis, "cleaning up the wild land fuels where possible and introducing fire break vegetation management. We developed fire control lines and looked at how we could modify the use of combustible fuels."

Especially important, he says, was the willing support of others. For example, the Fire Management and Forest Protection Branch of Saskatchewan Environment provided training to the community's First Nation fire crew. "And, of course, without the financial support of the FNFP, it would not have been possible for us to bring such a valuable program to life."

Not that there weren't some setbacks, says Lewis. "At the outset, a lot of people didn't want to lose the brush in their backyards. But when we explained the reasons, all agreed to have it removed." Others who had set aside traditional areas for sweats weren't always as willing to give up this important part of their lives. In the end, however, most recognized that the need for an effective fireguard was more important.

The pictographs that dot the shorelines of the adjoining Churchill River, as well as lakeshore outcroppings in the Lac La Ronge area, speak to the area's culture and traditions. Today, those who continue to enhance that culture and contribute to those traditions live a safer life, thanks to the decision to introduce an effective Fire Smart program.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$22,500
First Nation Funds	$19,100
Other Funds	$3,000
Total	**$44,600**

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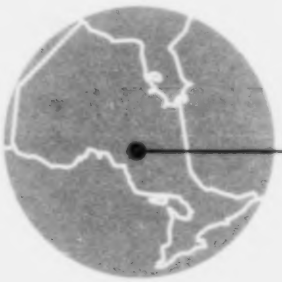
Missanabie Cree First Nation, Ontario

A return to the past is in their future

Although they have no physical or geographical presence—at least for the moment—members of the Missanabie Cree First Nation in Northern Ontario look forward to the day they return to their traditional territory. When that day comes, John McLeod and the other 345 members of the band will be fully prepared to reap the rewards of a forest-based economy.

"We've been planning and working to establish the foundation we need to succeed in the forest industry since at least 2000," says John. "That's when we first approached the Ontario government and the forest industry. We wanted their help in determining what we needed to do to successfully participate in the forest sector. We felt it was vital that we be technically prepared to negotiate agreements before our land claim is finally settled."

In the long term, says John, the Missanabie Cree First Nation was seeking a comprehensive agreement with the Government of Ontario and the forest industry. Such an agreement would balance the band's need to protect its environment with its desire to enjoy the benefits of a forest-based economy.



Missanabie Cree First Nation

In 2000-2001, with $30,000 in support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the band took a major step forward. It hired a consultant to assist in developing appropriate negotiations and planning strategies. Peter Politis of nearby Cochrane not only provided technical assistance in the area of agreements and contracts, but he also took on the role of the band's lead negotiator.

Acquiring the services of a trained consultant was essential to the band's ultimate success, says

Missanabie Cree First Nation Chief Glenn Nolan. "It was an important step, one we could not have taken without the FNFP." He also credits Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Industry Canada for their financial assistance. "Not only did the FNFP and the others help us hire the consultant, but they also gave us the resources to develop a forest initiative strategic plan. That plan allowed us to identify and outline the best way to reach an effective and comprehensive agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the forest industry."

As part of that initiative, the Missanabie Cree put together a negotiating team—made up of a project manager, community liaison, consultant, research group and lead negotiator—to come up with a strategic plan. The result of the team's efforts was a 48-page booklet outlining the band's goals and the strategy required to make those goals a reality. "We knew we had a wall in front of us," says John. "The 11 steps we identified in that strategic plan helped us get over that wall."

In addition to providing a roadmap, complete with schedule, the strategic plan identified areas within the forest industry in which band members should have the opportunity to further their skills and training. "For example," says John, "in the area of silviculture, we wanted to learn more about cone-picking, tree planting, thinning (manual and commercial) and site preparation. In harvesting, we wanted training in timber cruising, scaling, road building and maintenance, mapping and machine operations such as feller-buncher, skidder and delimber."

In 2005, all of the work and effort finally paid off. On January 25, the Missanabie Cree First Nation signed a comprehensive forestry partnership agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Tembec Inc. This new partnership will generate jobs, training and other benefits in exchange for access to forest harvesting rights in part of the First Nation's traditional territories. "It will help us become a more sustainable, self-reliant community," says Chief Nolan.

John adds that the agreement addresses all of the elements the band needs to be fully involved in the forest industry, from economic and ecological issues to training, capacity-building and business opportunities. But he's sure that one day, the agreement will go even further.

"When we finally return to our traditional territory, I believe that government and industry will continue to work with us to help re-establish our community," he says. For the 345 members of the Missanabie Cree First Nation, that day cannot come soon enough.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$60,500
First Nation Funds	$44,400
Other Funds	$176,000
Total	**$280,900**

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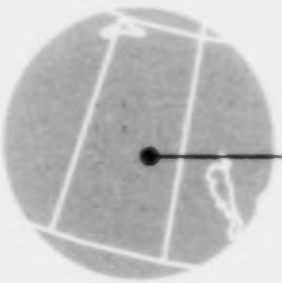
Prince Albert Grand Council, Saskatchewan

Firefighting training program moves forward

Many view Saskatchewan as a prairie province covered from one end to the other by flowing fields of wheat. In fact, more than half of Saskatchewan is covered by forest (some 355,000 square kilometres). And nearly a third of that area is considered commercial forest (about 140,000 square kilometres), most of it located in the northern part of the province.

As in all forested areas of Canada, fire is a constant threat. Over the years, a number of northern Saskatchewan communities have had to be evacuated as a result of forest fires. In response to this ongoing danger, the Government of Saskatchewan has introduced strict standards for training and certification of the province's firefighters.

Since 2000, the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) has worked hand in hand with the province to provide Wildland Firefighting Certification courses to First Nations communities in northern Saskatchewan. Working with the Fire Management and Forest Protection Branch of Saskatchewan Environment, the PAGC has introduced a program to train and certify members of First Nations communities in different areas of firefighting. With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the PAGC is expanding its Wildfire Certification Program.



Prince Albert Grand Council

The head of the PAGC's Forestry Program and one of the people instrumental in securing the training program is Cliff Buettner. He credits the FNFP and the Government of Saskatchewan for providing the support needed to expand the number and level of courses offered.

"Saskatchewan offers three categories of provincial firefighter certifications," he explains. "Type 1 firefighters, the most experienced, are trained as the Initial Attack crews. Type 2 firefighters assist Type 1 crews in sustained action on fires, while Type 3 firefighters possess basic firefighting skills and chainsaw and brush cleaning techniques. They often clean up areas after a fire."

In the past, he adds, the PAGC trained primarily Type 3 firefighters. "We were able to offer some Type 2 training but it was pretty well limited to crews already under contract. But with the assistance of the FNFP, we now have the resources to offer training to Type 2 firefighters on a much wider scale."

Cliff says the PAGC, which represents 12 bands and 27,000 members in northeastern Saskatchewan, is well positioned to provide quality wildfire firefighter training to the area's Tribal Councils and First Nations fire crews. "Certainly, we've come a long way since the province first gave us the opportunity to provide firefighter training. In the first year of the program, we provided 16 courses to organizations in the area; by the third year, we had increased that total to 53."

One of the first communities to take advantage of the training program was the Day Star First Nation. After a forest fire destroyed 20 percent of the reserve in 2000, community leaders contacted the PAGC (and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) to help them develop their own fire suppression training program. By the third year, 15 Day Star band members, all between the ages of 17 and 23, had earned a Type 3 certification through the program.

The next step for the PAGC is to expand the reach of its training program by involving the area's technical institutions, community colleges and similar agencies. According to Cliff, making the program accessible to more organizations will not only increase the area's ability to fight and suppress forest fires, but it will also give participants the skills and training they need to pursue other employment opportunities in the forest industry.

"We can't forget that future industrial forestry developments by the PAGC, or by any other individual First Nation, depend on the fact that our forests remain a sustainable and renewable resource. Through our enhanced wildfire firefighting program, we're making sure that happens."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$75,500
First Nations Funds	$405,600
Other Funds	$953,400
Total	**$1,434,500**

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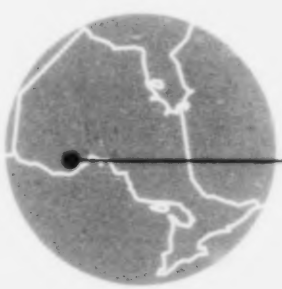
First Nations Forestry Youth Employment Program, Ontario

New name, same goals, added momentum

When Bowater Canadian Forest Products Inc. initiated the First Nations Ranger Program in the Thunder Bay area in 2000, it did so with some key goals in mind. The company wanted the nine-week, live-in camp program to give First Nations high school students the opportunity to acquire forest worker skills, raise their level of forestry awareness and inform them about post-secondary opportunities.

Today, the name of the Ranger program has changed—it's now called the First Nations Forestry Youth Employment Program. Also, the number of organizations supporting it has grown. Now on board are Weyerhaeuser Canada, Trus Joist (a Weyerhaeuser company), Tembec Inc., the Confederation College Forestry Centre and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. But the goals are much the same as they were back in 2000, says David Bradley of Outland Reforestation Inc., the company responsible for delivering the program since it began.



First Nations Forestry Youth Employment Program

"We want to promote a constructive working relationship between industry and local First Nations communities," he says. "We want to provide valuable training and work experience for those who enroll in the program, and we want to help build a skilled and committed work force for the future. Above all, we want the kids to have the opportunity to work hard, to make new friends and to have fun."

In the years since the program was introduced, more than 130 Aboriginal young people have done just that. And now, with the added financial assistance of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), it appears that even more will take part in the future.

"While having fun is key," says David, "it's also important that we make Aboriginal young people aware of the post-secondary opportunities available to them. The best way to do that is to build their knowledge and awareness of sustainable natural resources and to help develop employable skills, workplace ethics and business skills."

The program accomplishes those objectives in a two-year course, spread over a period of six to nine weeks every summer. While some weekend work is required, the participants generally work and train from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. They also get a four- or five-day break during the August long weekend.

In the first summer, the junior rangers split their time evenly between work and training. In the second summer, it's 60 percent work and 40 percent training. Since 2002, Bowater Canadian Forest Products Inc. has offered a third year in which the junior rangers work on production-oriented silviculture projects. This experience has encouraged many young people to return the following year as crew leaders in training.

David Archibald, the coordinator of the Forestry Technician Program at Confederation College, says the program fills an important and growing need. "While the program has focused on youth living on-reserve, it also assists community members living off-reserve," he says. "That encourages more Aboriginal young people to access the opportunities available in the natural resource industry." By focusing on the development of skills, competencies and knowledge, the First Nations Forestry Youth Employment Program helps overcome existing barriers to employment and education.

With the support of the FNFP, the forest industry, the Confederation College Forestry Centre and the Ontario government, three camps were established in 2004, including the first ever in northeastern Ontario. Fifty youths from 23 First Nations participated, and 96 percent of those who enrolled completed the program.

In fact, the program has been so successful (at least 20 former participants have found full-time employment) that Confederation College is leading the development of an Ontario-wide program. And a similar model is being considered for other natural resources sectors such as mining and energy.

It appears that the students who have entered the program agree that it deserves to be shared with others. One first-year student put it this way: "I would love to return to this program next year. I want my nieces to come to this program. I want everyone to join this program."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$60,000
First Nations Funds	$10,000
Other Funds	$495,000
Total	**$565,000**

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Yellow Quill First Nation, Saskatchewan

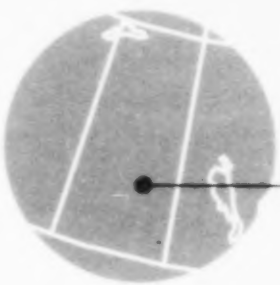
The Yellow Quill First Nation is located about 250 kilometres east of Saskatoon, near a town called Rose Valley and the communities of Kelvington, Nipawin, Hudson Bay and Kamsack. The First Nation is situated in the midst of a diverse environment in east-central Saskatchewan. The central regions of the province are transition zones. They shift gradually from the great grasslands of the south to the plentiful boreal forests that stretch up to the north.

The Yellow Quill First Nation has 90,000 hectares of forest that can be utilized for harvesting, ecotourism and non-timber forest products. According to Denny Hudy, a Project Manager and Manager of the YQDC, these kinds of activities will ultimately create employment and training for band members.

"We're working to get a clear picture of the forest resources available to us," says Denny.

First Nation teaches community members about forest inventory practices

The Yellow Quill Development Corporation (YQDC), the management company for the Yellow Quill First Nation's holdings, knows that viable forestry ventures will benefit its community. That is why it has invested in a forestry skills development and research project for band members. With the help of provincial and federal partners, the YQDC is preparing a detailed record of forest resources in the eastern forest fringe area of Saskatchewan. The goal of the project, which began in April 2004, is to train band members in managing natural resources in the area.



Yellow Quill First Nation

"We've had interest from several potential business partners. Once the report is finalized, we'll be able to further develop these opportunities." Of immediate benefit is the fact that the team is made up entirely of band members. "That's very positive for our community," he adds.

The first phase of the project focused on inventory preparation. The Yellow Quill band, along with Saskatchewan Environment, worked with EcoDynamics Consulting Group International Inc., a forestry consulting firm from Prince Albert. They selected 200 random plots of land to be assessed for tree species, height, age, quality and quantity. Random samples were selected from across 90,000 hectares, made up of both Crown and privately owned lands.

With the land plots evaluated and selected, the team trained for several days with the consultants to learn about forest inventory practices. They have been working out on the land since May 2004, taking measurements and collecting data on tree ages, species-group, and rates of growth. A refined wood volume estimate will be outlined in the final report, due in July 2005. At that time, the YQDC will present the findings to prospective business partners.

The initiative is based on a successful partnership with the YQDC coordinators—Saskatchewan Environment, which contributed $11,000 in kind, and the First Nations Forestry Program, which provided $20,500 in support.

"The inventory project supports the Memorandum of Understanding between the Yellow Quill First Nation and the Government of Saskatchewan," explains Denny, referring to the band's close partnership with the provincial government. "Our combined effort is beneficial in many ways. We're building excitement for new prospects and we're ensuring that we have input into the proposed use of these resources."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$20,500
First Nation Funds	$18,100
Other Funds	$11,000
Total	**$49,600**

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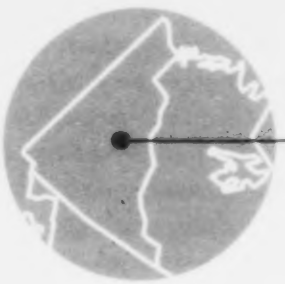
Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Territory

Workshop addresses forest business opportunities

Although their options are limited by factors such as climate and location, the First Nations communities that make up the Council of Yukon First Nations are determined to make the most of the forest resources available to them. With the financial assistance of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), they're introducing community members to the potential of small businesses based on the area's forest resources. Directing many of those efforts is Ann Marie Swan, the FNFP (Yukon) Coordinator since 2003.



Council of Yukon First Nations

Program activities and workshops over the past few years have addressed topics as far-ranging as values and principles to fire suppression training.

"While I coordinate and administer activities under the FNFP," says Ann, "it's the energy and the determination of the Council members (representing 11 of the Yukon's 14 First Nations) that drive the agenda." And what a progressive agenda it has been. Program activities and workshops over the past few years have addressed topics as far-ranging as values and principles to fire suppression training. These First Nations communities have had the opportunity to share their knowledge, explore economic opportunities and learn about the importance of maintaining a forest inventory.

"We've even developed a Web site to let visitors know what the FNFP (Yukon) is all about, what we've done in the past, and how they can reach members of our management committee," says Ann. "It also has links to important related sites." The most recent event was the Small Business Forest Development Ventures Workshop, sponsored by the Yukon arm of the FNFP in co-operation with the Government of Yukon. Held over three days in March 2004, the informative workshop attracted more than 100 participants.

"The workshop was designed to provide Yukon First Nations communities, as well as other residents in the area, an opportunity to learn more about small forest-based economic ventures," says Ann. "We invited a number of forest professionals to the Yukon to share their knowledge and experience with the workshop participants. For many, it was a chance to see what others

were doing to achieve success in the forest business sector. For others, it was reinforcement that they, too, could succeed in a small forest-based business."

The workshop covered a wide range of topics, including information on small woodlot logging equipment, small-scale silviculture operations equipment and practices, successful small forestry operations, lumber drying techniques, quality standards for logs and lumber, measuring the demand for Yukon forest products and fire-proofing forest industry operations.

While all Yukon residents were invited to participate, the workshop organizers placed extra emphasis on attracting Aboriginal young people, particularly those who wanted to know more about starting one- to two-person business ventures. To attract established small businesses, the workshop provided examples of what similar size businesses were accomplishing in other regions across Canada.

Although the workshop closed its doors after three days, participants are still reaping the benefits, says Ann. "We're confident that contacts established at this workshop will provide networks of information and professional support for all who attended for years to come. Also, we made 160 booklets available, which contain all of the workshop handouts, presentations and agendas, the biographies of every presenter, and a final workshop report."

While the FNFP was the key sponsor, Ann says credit for the workshop's success has to be shared with others. The Yukon government's Departments of Economic Development and Energy, Mines and Resources played an important role, as did each of the 14 representatives of the Council of Yukon First Nations.

"Together, we identified the different needs of the Yukon First Nations communities and those of the non-First Nations, business-minded people who want to tap into the forest economy. Then we structured a workshop to address those needs."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$113,200
First Nations Funds	$18,800
Other Funds	$10,000
Total	**$142,000**

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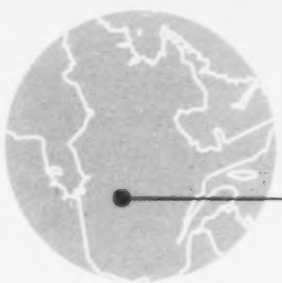
Waswanipi Cree First Nation, Quebec

Training opportunities secure Waswanipi's future

For generations, members of the Waswanipi Cree First Nation have relied on the surrounding forest to support themselves and their families. Even today, a substantial percentage of the community's 1,300 residents continue to earn their livelihood from traditional activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing.

In 1982, the Waswanipi Band Council initiated forestry operations on its lands. Council members recognized that the band's location—in the middle of a forest of black spruce and gray pine—offered a host of new economic opportunities. While that decision immediately produced significant social and economic advantages, it also caused some friction. On one side were those who favoured traditional uses of the forest, on the other side those who wanted to pursue the opportunities available through a modern forest industry.



Waswanipi Cree First Nation

> To minimize the impact on other forest resources, cutting blocks of no more than 40 hectares are spread carefully across an area of land.

In 1991, the Waswanipi Mishtuk Corporation, the community-owned organization created to oversee the band's forest industry operations, responded to those concerns by reducing the amount of wood it harvested every year. More significantly, it abandoned conventional clearcutting in favour of a checkerboard cutting strategy. To minimize the impact on other forest resources, cutting blocks of no more than 40 hectares are spread carefully across an area of land.

Today, the checkerboard strategy is still in place. And the band's forest industry, which co-exists peacefully with the area's traditional trapping industry, remains a vital contributor to the community's economy.

"Much of Waswanipi's success is due to a decade-long relationship it has enjoyed with the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP)," says Alfred Jolly, the Senior Supervisor of Forestry Operations for Mishtuk Corporation. "Without its support for our training, harvesting and

infrastructure activities, we could not have enjoyed the success we have in the forest industry."

That relationship has continued to prosper, he says, particularly in the area of training. Over the past few years, for example, the FNFP's support has helped the Mishtuk Corporation provide valuable training in commercial thinning. Also, those seeking work as forestry technicians or assistant technicians have been given the opportunity to gain hands-on experience.

"In the area of commercial thinning, we average about two trainees a year," says Alfred. "The training period covers about 20 weeks, split between the classroom and the field." Instruction is provided by a qualified instructor employed by Mishtuk Corporation, again with the financial assistance of the FNFP.

"The training program is already reaping dividends in the area of employment," says Alfred. "The people who participated have gone on to find employment in the forest industry."

The Mishtuk Corporation training program also gives community members the chance to work with qualified forestry technicians over the summer. The two or three people who participate every year work in the field, gaining valuable experience in areas such as inventory, quality of plantation, pre-commercial thinning, scarification and regeneration. "These young people not only gain skills they can use throughout their working lives, but they also get paid for the work they do," says Alfred. "That's a win-win situation for everyone."

These training opportunities are very important for the Waswanipi Cree First Nation, says Director General Jack Blacksmith. "We are an exceptionally young community," he points out. "More than 60 percent of our population is under 35 years of age. Their future lies in modern economic activities, such as forestry, that will play an increasing role in our local economy. With the help of the FNFP, these young people get a chance to acquire the skills and training they need to participate in a forest-based economy—and to contribute to their community."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$106,000
First Nation Funds	$1,184,100
Other Funds	$107,800
Total	**$1,397,900**

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Category 3:

Community Employment

Atikamekw d'Opitciwan First Nation, Quebec

Sawmill operation prepares to meet new challenge

Overcoming challenges is nothing new to members of the Atikamekw community of Obedjiwan in northern Quebec.

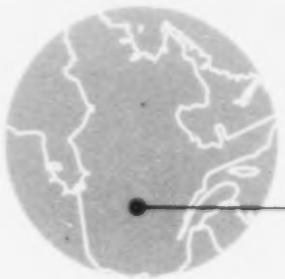
As recently as 1997, for example, more than 60 percent of the community's 1,600 members were on social assistance. While the area's forest companies did offer some occasional seasonal work, there were no opportunities for full-time employment available to band members. "Nothing," recalls Simon Awashish, the Chief at the time, "that could sustain our community on a permanent basis."

Rather than watch the area's forest companies cut the trees, haul the logs and reap the profits, Chief Awashish and several other band members decided it was time to keep the work and economic benefits in Obedjiwan. In 1998, with the full cooperation and support of Abitibi-Consolidated Inc., the area's leading forest company, the community opened its own sawmill. The Atikamekw community has been responsible for supplying the timber, providing the workforce and implementing a training program. Meanwhile, Abitibi-Consolidated focused on building the actual sawmill, providing expertise and marketing the operation.

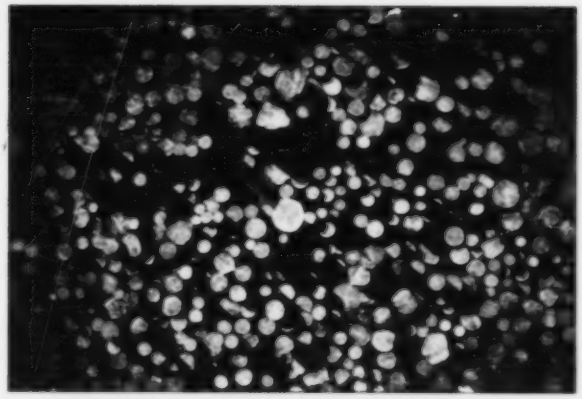
Today, the Opitciwan Sawmill is the economic heart of Obedjiwan. Owned by the band in partnership with Abitibi-Consolidated, the company generates over $9 million in annual sales. A forestry services section, wholly owned by the Band Council, has contracts for logging, reforestation, clearing and forest management work, totalling another $7.5 million. For this isolated community, located on the shores of the Gouin Reservoir in northeast Quebec, the economic turnaround has been as swift as it has been dramatic.

Most important are the jobs, says sawmill director Manon Pelletier. "The company employs 60 people, 93 percent of them from Obedjiwan. We've also introduced an internal training program to open up new career opportunities for our workers. Our annual payroll has reached $2.8 million."

Meanwhile, she adds, the company's forestry services section pays out more than $800,000 to 60 seasonal workers, all of them Aboriginal. "Other companies have also been created to support the sawmill's operations, providing machinery and vehicles, as well as transportation, loading and shipping services."



Atikamekw d'Opitciwan First Nation



While the introduction of the sawmill has been an unqualified success, new challenges are emerging. For example, says Manon, the available supply of wood is declining, forcing the company to look elsewhere for new supplies. Also, to remain competitive, the company recognizes it must address growing environmental concerns. Like it did in 1998, the Atikamekw community of Obedjiwan is meeting that challenge head-on.

With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Opitciwan Sawmill is seeking ISO 14001 certification. This will require the company to integrate environmental considerations into every level of its operations. "ISO 14001 requires that we develop and document a method to identify, control, monitor and review the ways in which we interact with the environment," says Manon.

The company has already taken some significant steps toward that goal, purchasing new equipment and machinery and investing in environmentally friendly wood storage systems.

"Seeking and achieving ISO 14001 certification fits in with the goals we set for ourselves when we built the sawmill, and they fit in with the goals we have for the future," says Manon. "We want to boost economic development, we want to generate stable jobs for local residents, and we want to continue to develop a skilled local workforce."

With the support of the FNFP, the Atikamekw community of Obedjiwan is making those goals a reality.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$41,400
First Nation Funds	$50,400
Other Funds	$86,100
Total	**$177,900**

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Betsiamites First Nation, Quebec

SADFB meets its goal to benefit the community

When created in 1987, the Betsiamites Forest Management and Development Corporation/ Société d'aménagement et de développement forestier de Betsiamites (SADFB) had one key goal—to ensure that the reserve's forest resources be used to benefit the Betsiamites First Nation both socially and economically.

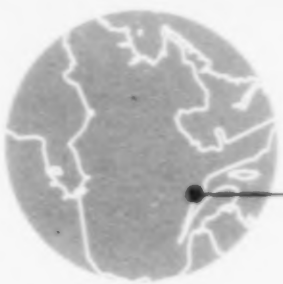
Over the years, the community-run organization has done just that. Today, the SADFB is a major employer in the area, delivering significant economic and social benefits to the 3,000 members it serves. André Côté, General Director of the SADFB, says the Corporation has succeeded because it recognizes that the forest is more than a source of industrial timber. "It is also our home, a place where our people live and work."

At the same time, the SADFB knows that it must be prepared to adjust to changes in the economy. With that in mind, the organization has constantly expanded and diversified its operations. "For example," says André, "in the past decade, we've worked with the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) to introduce outfitting operations on the reserve and to expand the community's harvesting operations to adjacent lands."

Today, the SADFB is a major employer in the area, delivering significant economic and social benefits to the 3,000 members it serves.

As a result of those efforts, he adds, the people of the Betsiamites community—located on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec—now enjoy significant economic and social benefits from their forest resources.

Still, says André, if the SADFB is to maintain its growth and profitability, it must continue to modernize its management methods. To that end, it worked with the FNFP to improve its processes and raise the level of client satisfaction. This will open the door to new contracts, resulting in even greater economic benefits and more employment opportunities for the people of the Betsiamites First Nation.



Betsiamites First Nation

"Our commitment to meet the highest standards of quality will enable the community of Betsiamites to become more autonomous and less reliant on outside consultants and workers," he says. This, he adds, is very much in keeping with the community's long-term goal of ensuring its members have the training and skills they need to succeed in the forest industry.

"Our policy has always been to re-invest much of our earnings to purchase needed equipment and to provide proper forestry training. We want to ensure that our people have every opportunity for employment in our forest operations."

The SADFB is also working with the FNFP to conduct forest management activities on a 140-hectare portion of the Nation's reserve land (which covers 25,240 hectares in total). Under the supervision of a technical team, the SADFB will plant 91,000 seedlings and construct 4.9 kilometres of secondary road. Another 4.9 kilometres of secondary road will be covered with gravel.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$511,500
First Nation Funds	$3,348,900
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$3,860,400**

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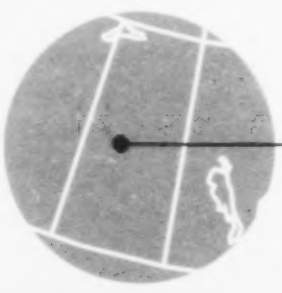
Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Saskatchewan

Forestry career training program supports community employment

The Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) is situated in north-central Saskatchewan, about 200 kilometres north of North Battleford in an eco-region known as the Mid-Boreal Forest. It sits just south of the Precambrian Shield and features a varied landscape of rolling hills, level plateaus and steep escarpments. Aspen, white spruce, jack pine, black spruce and tamarack trees are common to the region. There are large populations of moose, woodland caribou, mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, black bear, timber wolf and beaver.

The MLTC's summer School-to-Work program is celebrating its fifth year as a successful community employment project. Forty-five students have enrolled since 2001. Each has come away with a head start toward a career in Canadian forestry. School-to-Work coordinators say the program's effectiveness is rooted in its balanced teaching approach. The program offers a combination of standard industry training and traditional teaching by community Elders.



Meadow Lake Tribal Council

"Our Elders have seen our land go through many changes," says Mervin McIntyre, an Employment Services Officer for the MLTC. "It's very important that they sit in with our students and talk about how things were done in their days. Our goal is to teach forestry concepts in a way that includes the traditional point of view."

Community Elders address modern-day concerns and solutions in a holistic way, one that affirms the community's cultural and spiritual beliefs. They are regular speakers in MLTC schools and are available to provide counseling

services. Mervin says Elders are particularly concerned with protecting First Nations heritage and resources related to forestry, hunting, fishing and trapping.

"Our Elders are teaching what they have learned from our Cree and Dené ancestors," he explains, referring to the long history of traditional knowledge in the region. "For example, the students learn the technical aspects of harvesting but they also learn that those trees are home to local wildlife. They learn to respect the trees for more than just our own uses."

Each year, the School-to-Work program welcomes nine Grade 10-12 students into a six-week summer course. The program accepts one student for each of the communities represented by the MLTC. These communities include: Flying Dust First Nation, Birch Narrows Dené Nation, Waterhen Lake First Nation, Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation, Island Lake First Nation, Buffalo River Dené Nation, Canoe Lake Cree Nation, Clearwater River Dené Nation and English River First Nation.

"School-to-Work seems more popular every year," says Mervin, noting that he usually receives résumés from 20-25 applicants. During the selection process, MLTC coordinators interview the interested students to determine whether they are suitable and ready for training. "It's a good experience for these young people to go through an interview. It teaches them what interviews will be like when they look for jobs in the future."

The School-to-Work course makes use of several teaching methods. While the coordinators teach overviews and theoretical information in a classroom setting, field trips demonstrate practices in a true industry setting. Safety training, provided by local industry partners, is a major part of the course. Students get the opportunity to complete official safety certifications, often employment prerequisites. Certifications are available for First Aid, Bear Safety, ATV Safety, and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System training.

Mervin says that the program receives much support from Mistik Management Ltd., a forestry company partly owned by the MLTC. Mistik Management regularly hosts students on field trips so that they can experience working on MLTC's territorial lands. Also, the First Nations Forestry Program has contributed $292,000 to the MLTC School-to Work program over the last five years.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$292,000
First Nations Funds	$20,200
Other Funds	$3,600
Total	**$315,800**

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Category 4:

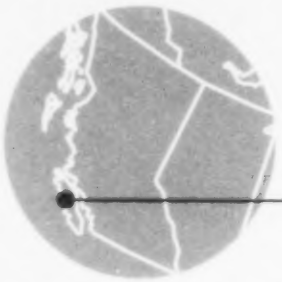
Forestry Business

Ditidaht First Nation, British Columbia

Another step forward in a successful relationship

Ditidaht Forest Products Ltd., a company wholly owned and operated by the Ditidaht First Nation of British Columbia, opened its doors for the first time in 1997. Later that year, with some welcome financial support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the company established a medium-sized sawmill near a lake on the reserve.

For the Ditidaht First Nation, a small community on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the sawmill marked an important step in its march toward economic independence. It also marked the beginning of a thriving relationship with the FNFP.



Ditidaht
First Nation

In 2002, the FNFP and the Ditidaht First Nation joined forces again. This time, the FNFP contributed $25,000—matched by $25,000 from Ditidaht Forest Products Ltd.—to create a detailed business plan for Ditidaht Cedar Salvage Ltd., another company wholly owned by the Ditidaht community. The business plan guided Cedar Salvage in the purchase, installation and operation of a mobile dimension sawmill at the existing mill site.

"It had become clear that the existing sawmill was unsuitable for producing small volumes of custom-cut cedar," says band representative Bryan Cofsky. "The new mill allowed us to extend the length of timbers to 44 feet, something we couldn't manage before." Meanwhile, the existing mill was redesigned to handle 28-foot hemlock and Douglas fir timbers and beams. "Changing market conditions made it necessary for the company to diversify into predominantly a hemlock and fir product," says Bryan.

"Changing market conditions made it necessary for the company to diversify into predominantly a hemlock and fir product."

As a result of those changes, Ditidaht Forest Products now produces an average 55,000 board feet per shift. That's a significant achievement and a welcome economic boost for the 180 on-reserve members of the Ditidaht First Nation.

To ensure it was possible to share equipment like front-end loaders, edgers, mill-yard buckers and waste management facilities, Ditidaht Cedar Salvage was established close to the main sawmill. Today, the mills also share administrative, supervisory, technical and maintenance expertise.

The dimension cedar sawmill is now a major part of Ditidaht Forest Products, and band members are being given every opportunity to participate in its success, says Bryan. "We're continuously offering band members training programs in areas such as millwright, sawing, grading and management."

While Ditidaht Forest Products has picked up the main portion of the training and supervisory expenses, both the provincial and federal governments have provided assistance through partnership programs.

"The new mill configuration will hopefully increase the profitability of the Ditidaht mill site," says Bryan. "Band members are now employed in new positions and new niche markets are opening up to the Ditidaht sales force. As business continues to increase, it is apparent that many more members will benefit, directly and indirectly."

For the Ditidaht First Nation, on the edge of forestry activities in its territory for so many years, the integration of Ditidaht Cedar Salvage into Ditidaht Forest Products is a clear sign that its future rests in the responsible stewardship of its forest resources.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$97,000
First Nation Funds	$146,000
Other Funds	$30,500
Total	**$273,500**

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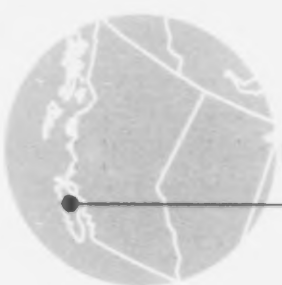
Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, British Columbia

Respect guides forest services company

In managing their natural resources, the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations of Vancouver Island in British Columbia have always been guided by a single belief— their relationship with the world around them is a gift to be treated with respect. The natural resources made available through this gift are not to be wastefully depleted.

Over the years, the commitment of the Nuu-chah-nulth people to protect and preserve their natural resources has been severely tested. The band members have used court injunctions, blockades and civil disobedience to protect the gift that was bestowed upon them. With that in mind, it was fitting that, when the development corporation of the Central Region Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations entered into a joint venture agreement with Weyerhaeuser Canada, the name of the company to emerge would be Iisaak Forest Resources Ltd.

In the Nuu-chah-nulth language, iisaak means "respect."



Nuu-chah-nulth
First Nations

Respect is certainly what the company has earned since it arose out of the conflicts that raged over the harvesting of timber in the Clayoquot Sound region in the early 1990s.

Today, Iisaak (pronounced E-sock) Forest Resources Ltd. is an innovative, First Nations-led forest services company, operating exclusively within Clayoquot Sound. It has been built on the philosophy of Hishuk-ish ts'awalk—respecting the limits of what is extracted and the interconnectedness of all things. As a result of its success, confrontation in the area is a thing of the past and respect has become the way of the future.

For the First Nations partners, the creation of Iisaak represented an important opportunity to build capacity in the forest industry, to employ band members and to establish value-added manufacturing facilities. The company now

manages Tree Farm Licence 57, covering a total of 87,000 hectares of forest on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

To help ensure the continuing success of the company and the participation of First Nations people in that success, the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) contributed $25,000 to an employment and training project. The project, says Cindy Verschoor, Iisaak's Special Projects Forester, focused on employing and training First Nations community members in field monitoring and assessment.

"The FNFP partially funded the six-month project," says Cindy. "As a result, we were able to hire five Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations members from local communities." One of those five crew members enrolled in the forestry program at the University of British Columbia to further her training and education, "a fact that has us all very excited," she adds. The project crew consisted of one field supervisor and four crew members. All were employed full-time, with benefits, for a total of 120 person-weeks.

Crew members had the opportunity to build the basic field skills they needed as long-term employees within the company. The crew was trained in First Aid, wildlife danger tree assessment, basic forest surveying techniques, stream identification, plant identification, culturally modified tree identification and ecological measurements.

"The support of the FNFP helped us build local capacity, strengthen the work force and create new opportunities for band members," says Cindy.

Iisaak is remarkable, not only because it is a majority-owned First Nations company, but also because it seeks to expand the range of products and services provided by the forest. That approach contributes to a stable economy for local resource-dependent communities.

For the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations, it means economic stability and the knowledge that future generations will continue to protect the gift that is their world.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$25,000
First Nations Funds	$3,600
Other Funds	$58,000
Total	**$86,600**

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Long Lake No. 58 First Nation, Ontario

Timber retrieval project gets underway this spring

The region surrounding the northern Ontario community of Long Lake No. 58 First Nation harbours a valuable but untapped resource. With the support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), says Henry Waboose, the band's Acting Economic Development Officer, the people of Long Lake will soon benefit from those resources.

Vast amounts of naturally preserved softwood lumber lie at the bottom of the many northern Ontario lakes and rivers, Henry explains. Studies carried out from 2001 to late 2004 identified valuable marketing potential for this submerged timber. This was confirmed in a series of research, engineering and pilot testing initiatives.

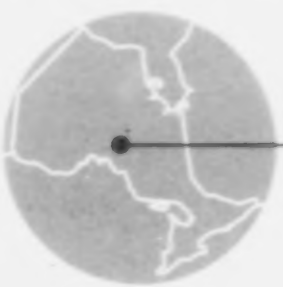
As a result of those efforts, says Henry, the Long Lake community is scheduled to begin a massive retrieval project this spring. The operation will be run under the First Nation's incorporated business name, Long Lake Timber Reclamations.

For more than 50 years, logging companies used the waterways northeast of Thunder Bay to shuttle timber to milling operations and processing plants. This practice ended in the early 1980s. Inevitably, many of the logs were lost en route and now sit at the river bottom, preserved over time. The band's research shows that there are enough submerged logs to support a retrieval project for 5 to 20 years.

"We know that the project is feasible," says Henry. "Our study revealed that many logs on the river were lost—as many as five to seven percent each year. Everyone is very excited about the opportunity. We'll be collecting logs once the spawning season is finished, from about June 15 to October 15."

The FNFP's contribution of $18,000 for 2003-2004 supported the feasibility and pilot testing stages of the project. Partnering with Thunder Bay's Cook Engineering, a U.S. consulting firm, the band created a unique floating system to salvage the logs. The logs are pulled from the water, moved onto a conveyor belt and immediately processed through a wood chipper. The chips are then loaded into trucks and delivered to pulp and paper mills.

Long Lake's wood chips are derived from coniferous and broadleaf trees such as black spruce, white spruce and balsam fir. Softwood is generally converted to construction wood or fibre for pulp used in paper manufacturing. "We've already got a sales agreement with



Long Lake No. 58
First Nation

Kimberly-Clark pulp mill," says Henry. "We'll deliver wood chips to their Terrace Bay plant, not too far from here."

Long Lake No. 58 made certain to consider the operation's impact on the environment. "The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has approved our plan to meet environmental regulations," says Henry. "We made sure that our log salvaging doesn't affect the natural balance of the river. We installed a large silk curtain in the water around the operation to minimize the river disturbance."

According to Henry, the business will create urgently needed employment and skills development for the community. A job shadow program for 10 band members is set to begin once plans are finalized. Long Lake's small community of 420 people has a high rate of unemployment so the opportunity to acquire new skills is very important.

"We hope to get as many band members involved as possible," Henry explains. "We want our community to be more active in managing the region's natural resources." The band approached FedNor for financial support for research and development. While Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has agreed to support the launch of the log-salvaging project, details are still to be confirmed. The funding will be used to purchase the necessary equipment and organize the training program.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$18,000
First Nation Funds	$300,000
Other Funds	$442,500
Total	**$760,500**

For more information, please contact:

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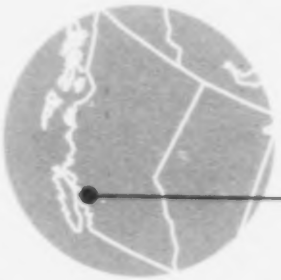
Richard Krentz, Queneesh Studios, British Columbia

A decade of exceptional progress for early FNFP recipient

A decade has passed since artist Richard Krentz received $50,000 in support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), one of the original group of 43 to receive assistance through the program. That decade has been one of extraordinary achievement, both for the FNFP and the West Coast Salish artist.

Today, Richard Krenz's work is recognized and admired internationally. From his Queneesh Studios in Black Creek, he produces a wide variety of authentic native products, ranging from feast ware to bentwood boxes, all made of wood that would otherwise be destined for the shipping mill. He is Chair of the Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia and owner of Hiwus Feasthouse on Grouse Mountain, and was a key figure in the Aboriginal Tourism component of Vancouver/Whistler's successful 2010 Olympic Bid. He also developed the brochure *Circles of Opportunity: BC's Aboriginal Peoples and the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games.*



Queneesh Studios

Richard's company, Hiwus Feasthouse Inc., recently entered into a partnership with the Fairmont hotels, the largest partnership for Aboriginal tourism in British Columbia and the only one of its kind in Canada. Under the agreement, Hiwus will provide Vancouver's Fairmont Waterfront Hotel with a complete package of Aboriginal-themed convention programming. More importantly, the project draws heavily on Richard's artistic skills, calling on him to transform the facility into a traditional West Coast longhouse or an entire First Nations village.

For Richard Krentz, whose name translates into Kwatam-us, or "put your face up and be proud" in the language of the Sechelt Nation, it has been an incredible journey, one he says has been made all the easier because of the assistance he received from the FNFP in 1996.

"I was always determined to be an artist," he recalls. "Even when I was young, and I had to forsake my carving to work in milling and logging for a brief time, I knew I would eventually realize my dream. The support from the FNFP made my dream come true that much earlier. It gave me the confidence to move forward and the financial foundation to survive mistakes along the way."

In fact, there have been few mistakes along the way, if any, for this gifted artist. The bentwood box—his signature piece and, he believes, his legacy—is sought by collectors everywhere. Once

used by West Coast Natives to store food, clothing, and household and ceremonial items, the bentwood box is an airtight container, the sides of which are made from a single plank of cedar.

While the bentwood box is his legacy, the turning point in Richard's artistic life may have come in 1994 when he came up with the idea to carve the world's largest totem pole. Raised in Victoria at the 1994 Commonwealth Games, the Commonwealth Totem Pole was an international effort. "Eleven nations of carvers came together to work as one people," he says. "For them and for all who see it, the pole represents how much we can achieve if we all work together."

Working together, hand in hand with the First Nations who seek its support, is a major driving force behind the FNFP. And Richard acknowledges that working together with the FNFP for some 10 years ensured that the assistance he received was put to the best possible use.

"The $50,000 helped us come up with a business plan, something we desperately needed," says Richard. "It helped us design and construct a display rack system that allows us to control how our merchandise is displayed in retail outlets. It also helped us move my studio to the Squamish Band lands in Vancouver." That move enabled Richard's young company to build a production facility in conjunction with the Feasthouse on Grouse Mountain. Using timber acquired through a partnership with a native mill, the production facility employed up to 100 native people and enabled visitors to view the entire production process, from the initial carving to the eventual purchase.

"It isn't always about art," Richard explains. "And it isn't always about making money. It's also about increasing the value of the trees."

Understandably, success, artistically and professionally, has increased the demands on Richard's time. But he knows his legacy is in good hands. "My daughter has taken over much of the control of the company and my young grandson is eager to learn how to carve a bentwood box. The future is a promising one."

Still, no matter how busy Richard is, he finds time every day to walk the trail near his home on Saratoga Beach. "I see sea lions out in the ocean, bald eagles in the trees watching for prey, and trumpeter swans seeking shelter in the wetland."

The walk, he says, reminds him of what is real in life.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$50,000
First Nation Funds	$50,000
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$100,000**

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Acadia First Nation, Nova Scotia

Forest management plan calls for expansion of sawmill operation

The Gardner Mill Property, entrusted to the Acadia First Nation by its previous owner, John Cook, comprises some 1,174 hectares of forest and lakes near Yarmouth. In 1993, recognizing the vast potential of the area's natural resources, the five communities that make up the Acadia First Nation developed and implemented a forest management plan for the property.

Lisa Francis, Economic Development Officer for the Acadia First Nation, says the plan was designed to preserve the area's natural beauty while opening the door to economic development. To further those economic development goals, she says, the band worked with the St. Mary's Business Development Centre to develop a comprehensive business plan for the area.

In operation since May 2004, the portable sawmill has enabled the band to implement selective cutting practices, obtain the maximum amount of lumber from each tree and cut its lumber to meet the specific needs of its customers.

Acadia
First Nation

At the heart of that plan was the creation of the Acadia First Nation Sawmill.

In operation since May 2004, the portable sawmill has enabled the band to implement selective cutting practices, obtain the maximum amount of lumber from each tree and cut its lumber to meet the specific needs of its customers. And that, says Lisa, meets both of the goals identified in the forest management plan.

"Since it opened," she says, "the sawmill operation has significantly enhanced employment opportunities for the 200 members of the Acadia First Nation who live on the Yarmouth reserve." In addition, several of the community members employed by the sawmill have gone on to obtain CSA-approved grading capabilities offered by the province of New Brunswick.

The sawmill has been so successful, in fact, that the band is now looking at the possibility of expanding the operation. With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), Lisa is putting together a plan that calls

for the band to continue its operations during the winter as well. "We would have to construct a building to house the sawmill," she says, "but we're confident it would increase our capabilities while introducing the Acadia First Nation Sawmill to a whole new market of consumers."

While the sawmill may appear to be an overnight success, Lisa points out that it has taken the combined efforts of many individuals and organizations to bring about that success. "Our forest management plan—the first step in the process—was designed in cooperation with the Nova Scotia Aboriginal Forestry Program. And while the business plan we put together for the Yarmouth reserve was developed by the St. Mary's Centre, much of the input was provided by Acadia First Nation Chief Deborah Robinson and other Council members." Credit must also go to Alton Hudson, the consultant hired to oversee the band's forest management plan, she adds.

If establishing the sawmill was a goal for the Acadia First Nation, its success has become a beginning. Research and consultation carried out by the band's community enhancement officer has generated a host of new and exciting ideas for the Gardner Mill Property.

"For example," says Lisa, "we're looking at the possibility of establishing a community lodge in the area one day." The lodge would feature a plaque to recognize John Cook, the individual who entrusted such a wonderful natural resource to the people of the Acadia First Nation.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$1,800
First Nation Funds	$19,400
Other Funds	$54,200
Total	**$75,400**

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M'TIWA-KI Services, Ontario

Forest firefighting course fuels employment

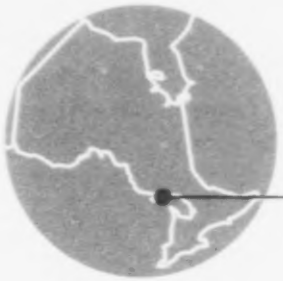
Companies dedicated to helping others develop and protect their forest resources often require a little help of their own. Since 1998, M'TIWA-KI Services of Manitoulin Island, Ontario, has counted on the assistance of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) to deliver a growing selection of services to First Nations, governments and forest companies.

Art Jacko, a member of the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve in Ontario and the founder of M'TIWA-KI Services, says FNFP support was particularly important in the company's early years. "It allowed us to be more competitive, to build training expertise and to secure additional contracts."

From just over $175,000 worth of business in its first year, the company's annual revenues now exceed $700,000 a year. The list of services it offers has grown to include project planning and management, technical forestry services, contract administration, negotiations, strategic planning, feasibility studies, forestry seminars and workshops, and forest compliance and monitoring.

M'TIWA-KI Services is now co-owned by Art and his wife, Marida McGregor, from the Whitefish River First Nation of Birch Island. Together, the two have transformed the company into an accredited training agency, authorized to deliver forest fire training throughout Ontario. Art says the company is committed to expanding that part of its business. With the support of the FNFP, it has embarked on an ambitious project to develop a cadre of Aboriginal instructors. "Training new Aboriginal instructors will give us a solid base from which to expand," he says. "And obtaining more work for the company will eventually mean we'll need more instructors."

Initially, the company will hire six Aboriginal firefighters. As well as being trained as instructors, they will assist the company in developing new and innovative ways to deliver its training programs, such as preparing the teaching material



in digital format. If all goes as planned, says Art, training provided to First Nations firefighters by M'TIWA-KI Services may eventually lead to employment opportunities with other training agencies. In any case, he says, it is his goal to have an entirely First Nations staff of training instructors by 2005.

First Nations fire departments have expressed a strong desire to acquire the company's forest fire-fighting program for municipal fire departments. And most of them want M'TIWA-KI Services to deliver that training.

"We've made a considerable investment into this part of our business," says Art. "In addition to training our own instructors, we've purchased a great deal of the equipment we'll need to actually deliver the training sessions." The company's inventory now includes chainsaws, brushsaws, work boots for the students, safety equipment, teaching aids for First Aid, and training manuals. It has even purchased new tables and chairs for the classroom where a portion of the training program is taught.

The investment already appears to be paying off, says Art. First Nations fire departments have expressed a strong desire to acquire the company's forest firefighting program for municipal fire departments. And most of them want M'TIWA-KI Services to deliver that training.

"Much of the credit has to go to the FNFP. Without its help, we could not have provided the professional training and purchased the necessary equipment to offer such a quality service."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$158,400
First Nation Funds	$279,600
Other Funds-	$45,200
Total	**$483,200**

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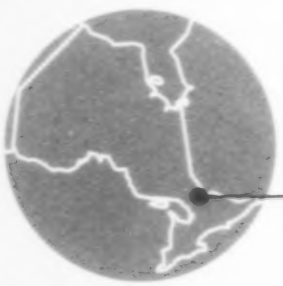
Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation, Ontario

Monitoring the growth of its harvesting operation

The success of their forestry operation in Ontario's Algonquin Park was a mixed blessing for the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation. As the harvesting operations grew from 8,000 cubic metres in 2000-2001 to 50,000 cubic metres today, the band realized it lacked the capacity to deal effectively with such exceptional growth.

The Makwa Community Development Corporation (MCDC), which handles all forestry related business for the First Nation, decided it needed a forestry operational plan and an experienced professional to carry out that plan.

"While the MCDC holds the contract with the Algonquin Forestry Authority, we don't run the actual harvesting operation," explains Manager Bonnie Sarazin. "We sub-contract out the entire operation to a First Nations forestry business. However, we are still responsible for ensuring that our contractors comply with the rules and regulations that apply to harvesting in Algonquin Park."



Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation

Feeling that it lacked the resources to develop an effective forestry operational plan on its own, the MCDC sought the assistance of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP). With the financial support of the FNFP, the MCDC was able to hire a professional forester—an Algonquin from within the community—to oversee its harvesting operations. The forester would go on-site to ensure that all of the issues raised in the operational plan were addressed.

Today, Steve Sarazin, the Forestry Operations Manager, supervises all of the MCDC's harvesting and silvicultural activities in Algonquin Park. He makes sure that the MCDC lives up to its obligations under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and the Environmental Management System guidelines defined by the ISO 14001 standard.

More specifically, Steve supervises and controls harvesting, forest management, silviculture and road construction carried out by the MCDC and its contractors in the park. He looks after quality control, health and safety, and makes sure all guidelines are followed. In addition, he makes certain that the operation runs at maximum efficiency.

The Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn—the only Algonquin First Nation in Ontario—are situated on the shores of the Bonnechere River and Golden Lake, about 1.5 hours west of Ottawa and approximately 2.5 hours from the harvesting areas in Algonquin Park. They are located in that portion of the Ottawa Valley where the forest sector is a dominant feature of the local economy.

The ability to harvest forested areas within Algonquin Park has introduced a welcome stability in terms of their economic future.

The Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn are acutely aware that their traditions and economic future are closely tied to the forest and its resources in their traditional territory. The ability to harvest forested areas within Algonquin Park has introduced a welcome stability in terms of their economic future.

Pikwàkanagàn is a small community with a registered membership of just over 1,800, says Bonnie. The population of the community itself is just 400 members.

"The success of the harvesting operation is essential to the local economy," she adds. "Today, with the help of the FNFP, the source of that economy is under the constant and careful supervision of a qualified professional."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$17,000
First Nation Funds	$80,700
Other Funds	$48,500
Total	**$146,200**

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Inuvik Native Band, Northwest Territories

Band looks to the river for its future in forestry

Given its location in Canada's Far North, it's not surprising that the Inuvik Native Band has been limited in its access to forest resources of standing timber. The presence of permafrost is the main factor; it restricts standing timber to the flood plains of the major rivers in the area, including the Mackenzie, Peel, Arctic Red, Rat and Rengleng Rivers.

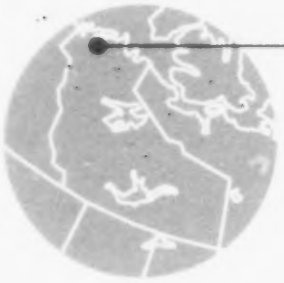
Despite those obstacles, the Gwich'in Settlement Area in the Northwest Territories, home of the Inuvik Native Band, has enjoyed a small but thriving timber industry for decades. That's because the main source of the band's timber resources is not the forest, it's the Mackenzie River.

The Gwich'in communities have historically harvested and milled the logs that drift down the Mackenzie River, explains a senior band member. "Over the years, these logs have been used for traditional purposes—for steamboats, community construction and domestic uses." In fact, he says, the Inuvik Native Band used milled and harvested drift logs from the Mackenzie River to construct the town of Inuvik in the 1950s and 1960s. The drift logs—primarily white spruce—are harvested immediately after the Mackenzie River ice breaks up and floats out.

Now, the Inuvik Native Band is seeking to expand its timber industry beyond simply meeting its own needs. With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), it is developing a forestry business plan, one that calls for the creation of a viable timber industry in the area. "When completed," says the spokesperson, "the business plan will give the band the direction we need to operate and participate in forest-based development opportunities. The information we gather will tell us whether expansion is feasible and, if it is, how we should proceed."

The Inuvik Native Band is fortunate in that it has a solid foundation on which to build a thriving timber industry. In 1994, for example, the communities of the Gwich'in Settlement Area purchased a Wood-Miser sawmill. The low technology operation is ideal for milling driftwood. In 1998, band members were trained to use the mill for a variety of products. And recently, a review found that, when high quality logs are used, the mill is capable of producing almost any sawn timber product.

The Inuvik Native Band has already identified and collected the information required to prepare its forestry business plan, including an inventory of forest resources, a list of existing manufacturing opportunities and a study looking at the area's demand for wood products. The band is now working with Nehtruh Development Group Inc.—a company it created specifically to explore economic opportunities in the area—to complete the business plan. A registered professional forester has consulted with Nehtruh and is assisting with this project. In addition, a band member is working with the consultant to carry out further research.



Inuvik Native Band

The band spokesperson says he's confident the business plan will confirm that there is a market for its wood products. Inuvik has become a staging area for significant oil and gas exploration and drilling, and that alone has created a demand for wood products.

"We have the supply and we have the demand. With the help of the FNFP, we may soon have the business plan to make our vision a reality."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$20,200
First Nation Funds	$9,300
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$29,500**

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Penelakut Tribe, British Columbia

Respect for environment guides forestry initiatives

When British Columbia's Penelakut Tribe decided to explore the economic opportunities available through forestry, it did so with one important condition—any plan to develop the Tribe's forest reserves had to respect the environment.

"We knew that there were economic opportunities available to us through forestry," explains Band Manager Lisa Shaver. "And because we have such a high unemployment rate, a lot of those opportunities were tempting. But we wanted to be sure that we didn't overlook our natural heritage—our appreciation for our lands and environment—when making a decision about our resources."

The environment is indeed special for the nearly 600 members of the Penelakut Tribe, who live mostly on Kuper Island, about five kilometres off Vancouver Island. The area is accessible only by air and sea. A few other band members also live on nearby Tent Island and Galiano Island.

Penelakut Tribe

Today, thanks in part to the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the people of Penelakut (which translates into "something buried") are striking the right balance for their future and their environment. In partnership with Shelterwood Forest Management Ltd. of Courtenay on Vancouver Island, the Tribe has developed a forest community development plan.

In line with the band's original goals, the plan meets its economic needs while addressing its environmental concerns. The development plan contains a value-added lumber operation, the development of a harvesting and silviculture operation, the acquisition of a woodlot licence, and an exploration of forest tenure opportunities with the province's Ministry of Forests.

The plan also calls for an initial training program for band members. The program, and particularly the response to it, has been an overwhelming success. "About 20 band members expressed interest in the training program," says Lisa. "Of those, a dozen went on to complete the program. And it wasn't an easy program."

In just five days, students were taught how to set up and run a small business and learned the elements of basic silviculture, such as spacing, pruning, thinning and tree planting. "The fact that so many chose to take the program shows just how willing the people here are to participate in the development of our forest reserves." In fact, she adds, another 10 band members have expressed an interest in further instruction.

In just five days, students were taught how to set up and run a small business and learned the elements of basic silviculture, such as spacing, pruning, thinning and tree planting.

Lisa says the band was fortunate because it had a number of key elements in place before it began work on the management plan. For example, about a half-dozen members of the Penelakut Tribe had some experience in logging and silviculture. In addition, the Tribe already owned a portable sawmill, used to cut lumber for the reserve's school.

Being able to work with Shelterwood was also beneficial, says Lisa. "Tapping into their professional forest management skills allowed us to appreciate—and to understand—the options available to us. It gave us the confidence we needed to make the right choices."

Good advice was also available closer to home. A community meeting, held to increase awareness of the value of forest reserves, not only attracted a large crowd, but also provided a venue for the band's Elders to point out the advantages of developing non-timber forest products (for example, harvesting and marketing blackberries to other communities in the area).

Today, the Penelakut Tribe members view the future with hope. They envision a brighter future and a stronger community through the sustainable management of their forests.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$25,000
First Nation Funds	$44,400
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$69,400**

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Category 5:

Ecotourism/Forest Resources

Lennox Island First Nation, Prince Edward Island

Hiking trail of the ancestors brings Mi'kmaq history to life

The Mi'kmaq were the first people to inhabit Prince Edward Island, travelling back and forth from the mainland some 2,000 years ago. Moving from place to place and living in huts of skin and bark, the Mi'kmaq hunted deer in the winter and fished in the summer.

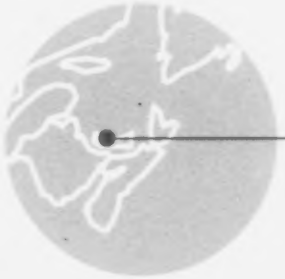
Unfortunately, much of the Mi'kmaq's traditional way of life has been lost, as have many of the natural resources that supported their culture and their livelihood. For example, the black ash, long used by the Mi'kmaq to produce baskets and other traditional items, is almost impossible to find on the island today. Basket making, explains Tiffany Sark of the band's Ecotourism Office, was a vital part of the community's economy from the 1940s until the early 1980s. "The baskets were often sold to area farmers who used them for picking potatoes."

Fortunately, she says, what hasn't been lost over the years is the Mi'kmaq's appreciation for their past and for their area's unique natural resources. With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Lennox Island First Nation community is now building a long-term, sustainable tourism industry, one based on its culture and its environment. As a result, says Tiffany, the Lennox Island First Nation is securing its future while bringing its past to life for others.

At the heart of the band's ecotourism dream is a 10-kilometre hiking trail on the 534 hectares that make up the Lennox Island reserve. The trail—called the "Path of Our Forefathers"—is one of only two coastal looped hiking trails in the province. Interpretive signs along the trail inform visitors about the island's environment while providing a rare insight into the rich history of the Mi'kmaq on Prince Edward Island.

Assistance provided by the FNFP not only enabled the ecotourism community-based program to bring its vision to life, but it also helped the band address long-term maintenance needs and introduce much-needed improvements to the hiking trail, says Tiffany. "We've added a number of productive and positive features such as new boardwalks, improved drainage and more parking."

The FNFP's support also enabled the band to commission a trail improvement plan. This will ensure that the Lennox Island First Nation has the resources to continue improving the ecotourism trail in the future.



Lennox Island
First Nation

"The FNFP was particularly instrumental in helping the band bring the ecotourism vision to life in the first place," says Jesse Francis, one of the people most responsible for the success of the project. Jesse worked with the Lennox Island First Nation on the project while on secondment from Parks Canada. "The FNFP's assistance enabled us to establish an important link with the Acadia University's School of Recreation Management to carry out the first phase of what was a three-phase plan."

With the help of a graduate student from Acadia University, the Lennox Island band conducted extensive research about ecotourism on Prince Edward Island. They studied the economic, social, cultural and environmental impact of ecotourism. The advantage of partnerships and cross-cultural relationships was also considered.

"At the end of the first phase," says Jesse, "we felt confident enough to go on to the second phase of the plan, the actual construction of the Path of Our Forefathers. When that proved a success, we were able to move on to the third and final phase, adding more signage, improving safety and making minor improvements to the trail."

Today, says Tiffany, tourists from all over the world enjoy the Path of Our Forefathers. But even more important, she adds, is the pride that the trail has instilled in community members. "They love to walk the trail and feel the presence of their ancestors."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$20,600
First Nation Funds	$20,700
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$41,300**

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Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation, Ontario

First Nation launches feasibility study for an interpretive centre

The ecotourism industry is growing at a rapid pace in Northern Ontario, particularly across the province's wide stretch of boreal forest, where the Wabigoon Lake First Nation is located. Also known as "Sunset Country," the region's intricate system of lakes, rivers and diverse wildlife makes it a popular destination for tourists. The lush boreal forest is home to black bears, deer, moose, rabbits, raccoons, eagles, owls, ducks and countless birds and other species. Common tree species include jack pine, black spruce, white spruce, white birch, and black ash. The unique Wabigoon River conservation area also supports many plant species—even wild rice, which is harvested and distributed by the band's company, Kagiwiosa Manomin.

Hoping to build on the region's plentiful resources, the Wabigoon Lake Ojibway Nation launched a feasibility study to assess the potential benefits of building an educational and interpretive centre. Through a combination of educational programs and exhibits, the centre will bring value-added opportunities in ecotourism and support the band's local forestry ventures.

In 2003, the Wabigoon Lake band enlisted the expertise of the Taiga Institute to help with feasibility research for the interpretive centre. The Taiga Institute works with rural Northern Ontario and Manitoba communities to establish projects that focus on environmental stewardship as a means of economic growth. The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) contributed $15,000 to support the research.

"It's a phenomenal area. The Ojibway people have long-standing historical ties to the landscape," says Andrew Chapeskie, a researcher with the Taiga Institute. "The Wabigoon Lake band members know where to locate the eagles, bears and moose. They can also guide visitors to some ancient pictographs in the forest. Our

Wabigoon Lake
Ojibway Nation

research shows that an interpretive centre would help teach visitors about the local wildlife ecology and the cultural landscape associated with it."

Andrew adds that Wabigoon Lake is very accessible geographically. The band's 5,209-hectare reserve, located just 20 kilometres southeast of Dryden, is not far from the Trans-Canada Highway.

Using recommendations from the study, the Wabigoon Lake First Nation will continue to develop plans for the centre. The First Nation will also seek advice from local tourism organizations, such as the Northern Ontario Native Tourism Association, on marketing activities that can help attract visitors.

The feasibility study builds on other projects the band has completed with the assistance of the FNFP. Together with local industry partners, the First Nation has implemented several successful projects related to natural resource management. In 2002, the band fulfilled an FNFP project that identified a milling opportunity. The band also established some marketing opportunities with timber species in the region that hadn't previously been in demand. Today, Wabigoon Lake has a fully operational tree nursery that produces six million seedlings annually through contracts with companies like Bowater and Weyerhaeuser.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$15,000
First Nation Funds	$47,000
Other Funds	$230,000
Total	**$292,000**

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Fisher River Cree Nation, Manitoba

Log cabin links First Nation's past to its future

The massive log cabin that greets visitors to the Fisher River Cree Nation in Manitoba does more than simply provide information about the band's long history. The Visitor Centre is, in fact, an example of that history, especially in its determination to participate in a forest-based economy.

The Visitor Centre is a three-phase project. Phase I was the actual construction of the log cabin that now serves as the Visitor Centre. Phase II saw three 5-metre decks, a 5-metre upper viewing balcony, and wheelchair access ramps added to the Visitor Centre. Phase III will see the construction of a 100-metre, log-frame memorial boardwalk.

The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has been part of the Visitor Centre project since it started, says George Crate, a member of the Ochekwi-Sipi Economic Development Corporation that oversees the band's economic future. He says the FNFP's support for the first two phases was essential to the project's success and to the economic future of the Fisher River community.

Fisher River Cree Nation

"Projects like this enhance our ability to take advantage of the many economic development opportunities available in a forest-based economy," he says. "It also gives our people the opportunity to develop the skills they'll need to succeed in the forest industry." The Visitor Centre project, he adds, stands at the very heart of the community's strategic plan and long-term vision.

The excitement generated by the Visitor Centre and its expected impact on the local economy is evident in the willing participation of local firms in the cabin's construction. Trent's Custom Logs, for example, donated the material and labour for the log fence, the two entry gates and the archway entrance. Company owner Darryl Crate, who has extensive training in custom log work, says he was able to pass on much of his knowledge to co-workers during the project. In addition, outside parties have expressed interest in the company's services as a result of its work on the project.

Although the log cabin was designed primarily to provide an overview of the band's history and give visitors a glimpse into its future, the Visitor Centre will also host community activities, feasts, entertainment and celebrations. This hands-on approach to the centre is reflected in the history portion, which has been presented in a variety of formats to encourage community members and visitors to share the band's past. It is also evident

in the decision to open the Visitor Centre during the band's second annual Powwow Days and the annual treaty celebrations that will follow.

With Phase II now complete, says George Crate, the Visitor Centre is the perfect venue to serve as an arrival/departure point for community members, visitors and tourists. He adds that Phase III—the construction of the boardwalk leading to an amphitheatre/stage—will take it one important step further.

"By connecting the existing Visitor Centre to the amphitheatre," says George, "the boardwalk will become a place for community members to enjoy the riverside view and to celebrate their appreciation for our natural resources and environment. It will also serve as a place for the community to gather from spring right through to the fall."

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$74,100
First Nation Funds	$34,400
Other Funds	$21,600
Total	**$130,100**

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Rolling River First Nation, Manitoba

Building a future on the shores of a lake

When Elvin Hunting Hawk of the Rolling River First Nation in Manitoba looks out over nearby Otter Lake, he sees the beginning of a bright new future for his people.

"One day, I believe we'll have up to 30 log cabins here," he says, "built by our people and used by visitors from across the province and the rest of Canada." When that day comes, he predicts, the people of the Rolling River First Nation will at last enjoy the benefits that come with long-term employment opportunities. And that, he says, will reduce the band's dependence on social assistance.

With the financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), that day may not be far-off. Three log cabins have already been built, waiting to be moved to the shores of Otter Lake. There, visitors who come to fish and experience the natural beauty of the area or who simply want a time-out from the hustle and bustle of city life will use them.

Rolling River First Nation

The Rolling River First Nation is located in southwestern Manitoba, about 70 kilometres north of Brandon and 345 kilometres west of Winnipeg. About 500 residents live on-reserve while another 435 or so live off-reserve.

While the Rolling River First Nation is focused on its pursuit of that ecotourism village, it hasn't lost sight of other economic benefits available through the wise use of its forest resources.

"The long-term goal is to increase the band's economic capacity by creating a tourism operation," says Elvin, "but the short- and medium-term goals are important to us as well." In fact, four community youths were hired to help build the cabins. Thanks to the financial support provided through the FNFP, the youths were brought on board to construct a combination concrete/wood foundation for the first three log cabins. They also did all the finishing work for each of the cabins.

The cabins, built from logs harvested in 2003, will be moved to the shores of Otter Lake when the tourism operation—tentatively called Rolling River Tourism and Outfitting—is ready to begin. The band is now working with the nearby community of Erickson to restock the lake and deal with any jurisdictional barriers. When that's done, says Elvin, it will mark "the beginning of an eco-village" on the shores of Otter Lake.

While the Rolling River First Nation is focused on its pursuit of that ecotourism village, it hasn't lost sight of other economic benefits available through the wise use of its forest resources. With the support of the FNFP, the band has trained 10 youths in modern logging practices.

"They've learned how to assess our forests in terms of timber," says Elvin. "They've acquired the skills and knowledge to identify those areas of the forest that should be thinned out and how to properly appraise trees that are ready to be harvested." Remarkably, these youths have completed what is often a six-month course in just four weeks.

"The knowledge these young people now possess will benefit our community for years to come," says Elvin. "They'll apply what they know to ensure we adopt a proper forestry plan for our area. In the years ahead, they'll be able to pass along what they've learned to future generations."

For the Rolling River First Nation, it means a future based on all of the good things their forest resources have to offer—a future based on their respect for the environment and their appreciation for the area's natural resources.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$41,500
First Nation Funds	$64,100
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$105,600**

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Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, New Brunswick

First Nation sees ecotourism as means of sharing traditional knowledge

The Maliseet and Mi'kmaq Nations have a long-standing connection to the Acadian Forest. They are the original stewards of the ancient maritime landscape, a region that features diverse mixed-wood forests. Today, the Madawaska Maliseet First Nation is developing the area's ecotourism potential, undertaking plans to educate visitors and generate economic benefits for the community.

"We're building the ecotourism complex so that we can share our knowledge of the forests and create business opportunities and jobs for our people," says Richard Wallace, Economic Development Officer for the First Nation. "Our Elders have taught us their understanding and respect for the land and we see an opportunity to teach others."

To date, the complex is composed of a demonstration woodlot featuring a nature trail alongside the Iroquois River, a trout hatchery and fish-out pond, and a campground.

While the complex is not yet complete, several components are ready for visitors, adds Richard. To date, the complex is composed of a demonstration woodlot featuring a nature trail alongside the Iroquois River, a trout hatchery and fish-out pond, and a campground. Once the construction is complete, the interpretive centre will house aquatic biological exhibits describing the history of fisheries in New Brunswick, and a retail store for band-produced wares such as smoked fish, maple syrup, fiddleheads and crafts.

The band drafted plans for the complex and began preliminary research in the summer of 2004. With the support of the First Nations Forestry Program and Nexfor Papers Inc., it enlisted two forestry students from the University of Moncton to complete an inventory of the timber and flora on the 83.7-hectare lot. The students recorded the characteristics of the area's mixed-wood tree species, vegetation and wildlife. They worked closely with band member Darryl Nicolas to identify and photograph 48 native medicinal plants that can be observed along the nature trail.

"We've just started out with the nature trail tours," said Richard. "We're going to develop some marketing plans to draw more attention from tourists in the area."

One such marketing piece is a recently published booklet that profiles the medicinal plants in the area. Featuring photographs and descriptions of traditional uses, the booklet teaches readers about the Maliseet Nation's holistic approach to using natural resources. Published in Maliseet, English and French, the booklet is distributed locally and will be available at the interpretive centre when it opens in 2006.

Madawaska Maliseet First Nation

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$67,600
First Nation Funds	$13,900
Other Funds	$12,500
Total	**$94,000**

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Category 6:

Traditional Knowledge

'Namgis First Nation, British Columbia

First Nation looks to its past to shape its future

Looking back at its heritage and its culture is helping the 'Namgis First Nation of British Columbia look ahead—to a future in which the band's economic and social stability is balanced by its ongoing appreciation for the environment.

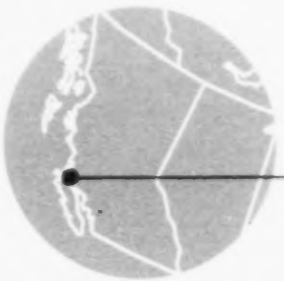
With financial support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), as well as the Royal Roads University, the 'Namgis First Nation is developing a sustainable non-timber forest product (NTFP) initiative. "Put another way," says 'Namgis Forestry Coordinator Edward Jackson, "we're looking into opportunities outside of traditional wood products, such as timber or shakes."

That approach, the band members believe, will strengthen the community's traditional link to the use and management of NTFPs. At the same time, it will enable the 'Namgis to tap into the growing number of commercial opportunities available in the NTFP industry.

"In the past," says Edward, "our small community has had few forest-based business opportunities." For years, he adds, the band members had to rely on seasonal work in the tourism industry or find occasional employment with off-island logging companies. Compounding the band's economic woes were the economic decline in the forestry sector and the collapse of local coastal fisheries.

The 1,500 members of the 'Namgis First Nation, half of whom live in the town of Alert Bay on Cormorant Island, off Vancouver Island, welcome the decision to pursue opportunities in NTFPs. They share the belief that NTFPs have the potential to bring increased economic and social stability to their community.

Certainly, the goals established in the NTFP initiative reflect the band's optimism. For example, a key objective calls for the creation of a new First Nations business each year for up to three years. During that period, the 'Namgis First Nation expects to train 10 community members in one or more aspects of NTFP harvesting, processing or marketing. All will learn more about activities and products, such as medicinal and herbal plants, floral greenery, wild mushrooms, craft products, ethnobotanical workshops and forest tours.



'Namgis First Nation

The 'Namgis First Nation isn't alone in this initiative directed by the Royal Roads University. Several other Nations from the northern part of Vancouver Island—the Kwakiutl, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw, Da'naxda'xw and Quatsino First Nations, as well as the Musgamagw Tsawataineuk Tribal Council—are also taking part. Like the 'Namgis band, they believe there are real benefits in achieving long-term capacity in NTFP development. Possibilities for the future include enterprises that are owned and operated by First Nations, partnerships with others, or cooperative ventures with regional stakeholders.

Areas being explored include cultural tourism, ethnobotanical educational services, and the manufacture of cedar oil, as well as medicinal and personal care products.

Encouraged by the initiative and by the support of the FNFP, the 'Namgis First Nation is already pursuing opportunities within the NTFP sector. Areas being explored include cultural tourism, ethnobotanical educational services, and the manufacture of cedar oil, as well as medicinal and personal care products. Floral greens and mushroom workshops have already led to the creation of 10 part-time jobs, 7 of which are in the floral greens industry alone.

In the long term, it appears that cultural eco-tourism has the greatest potential for the First Nations of northern Vancouver Island. Pursuing opportunities in that area, says Edward, will enable the 'Namgis First Nation to preserve its respect for the past while providing real benefits for its future.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$45,000
First Nation Funds	$26,300
Other Funds	$17,000
Total	**$88,300**

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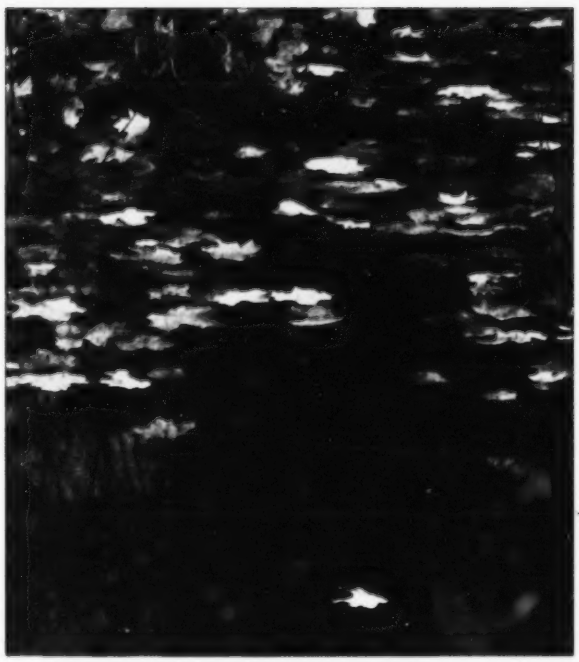
Pikangikum First Nation, Ontario

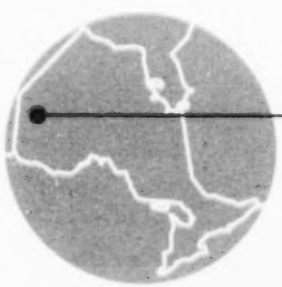
Harmonizing land use and traditional knowledge

Traditional knowledge and cultural land values are a priority for the Pikangikum First Nation of Northwest Ontario. The First Nation's commitment to balancing environmental and cultural sustainability with commercial opportunities is evident in its forest management plan, known as the Whitefeather Forest Initiative (WFI).

"The WFI is significant because the indigenous people who live and work in the region are designing land use for the future," says Karen Chapeskie of the Taiga Institute. The Institute works with rural Northern Ontario and Manitoba communities to establish projects focusing on land stewardship as a means of economic growth.

Pikangikum's reserve of 2,100 people is nestled in a remotely accessible community, approximately 300 kilometres northwest of Dryden. The community is situated at the headwaters of the Berens River in the heartland of an untouched, wild boreal forest. Pikangikum traditional territory is part of the 1.3 million hectares that make up the Whitefeather Forest Planning Area.





Pikangikum First Nation

The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has been involved with the WFI since consultations began in 1999. With the financial support of the FNFP, information has been gathered through ongoing community consultation, feasibility research and technological studies. The draft WFI land use strategy will be released for review and comment in the spring of 2005.

"The Pikangikum First Nation has taken the lead on this project," says Karen. "The band members created an internal organizational approach to planning that is rooted in customary, indigenous ways of making decisions. They work together using a dialogue-based system that respects Elders' views and involves youth from the community."

Planning for the WFI is led by the Pikangikum First Nation. A steering group made up of the most esteemed community Elders provides guidance. The WFI ensures that cultural land will be maintained and accounted for. For example, when collecting data for modern Geographical Information Systems, consultants account for, and encourage preservation of, berry and wild rice harvest areas, traditional drum ceremony locations, pictograph sites, and seasonal wildlife habitat areas.

Ultimately, the WFI goal is to create economic opportunities for the Pikangikum people. Under the direction of the Pikangikum Steering Group, and with input from other local advisory committees and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the First Nation hopes to strike a balance between economic benefits and cultural uses of its traditional territory.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$161,200
First Nation Funds	$189,700
Other Funds	$110,000
Total	**$460,900**

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Category 7:

Regional Initiatives

New Brunswick Aboriginal Forestry Initiative

Training and job placement program will increase Aboriginal communities' participation in the forest industry

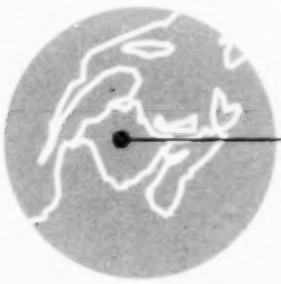
In October 2003, Human Resources Development Canada announced a new program to support Aboriginal participation and jobs in major resource development projects. The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program received a total funding allocation of $85 million over five years.

The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) took advantage of this opportunity of additional funding for the resource sector and, in the fall and winter of 2003, provided leadership in developing a four-year, regional forestry skills training partnership initiative worth over $4 million in New Brunswick, benefiting all 15 First Nations. Partners supporting the initiative included the New Brunswick Tribal Councils, First Nations Human Resources Development Corporation, New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council, New Brunswick Forest Products Association and Human Resources Development Canada, as well as the Government of New Brunswick.

The FNFP is committed to contributing $70,000 per year and, with contributions of $930,000 from the other partners, the initiative will have an annual funding of $1.1 million for the years 2004-2008. Through this initiative, the partnership expects to create and retain up to 180 sustainable full-time jobs for Aboriginal people in the forest industry and to provide forestry employment-related training and training upgrading for 700 Aboriginal workers. In September 2004, all partners signed an agreement and ASEP-NB Inc. was incorporated with a Board of Directors and staff. The corporation's head office is located at the Eel Ground First Nation reserve near the City of Miramichi, and its day-to-day operations are conducted out of the Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre in Fredericton.

Steve Ginnish, a Forestry Development Officer with the Eel Ground First Nation, heads up the team of four people. He envisions the Aboriginal communities of New Brunswick joining together to help young people develop useful skills and find jobs in the forestry industry. The team is working toward a goal of creating 200 new jobs within four years.

"Our aim is to encourage Aboriginal communities to actively participate in New Brunswick's forest industry. We believe that ASEP-NB Inc. will bring employment opportunities to many individuals and communities that would not otherwise have had the chance to develop job-ready skills," says



ASEP-NB Inc.

Steve. "The smaller communities, in particular, will benefit from joining a province-wide program because they will have access to a larger pool of resources."

"This project is clearly going to make a positive difference in the career choices open to Aboriginal peoples, and a definite contribution to the prosperity of local communities and Canada's economy as a whole," said the Honourable Andy Scott, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. The Minister spoke about the new initiative at the launch event held at the Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre in September 2004.

"The FNFP is a long-time supporter of Aboriginal forestry initiatives in the province," says Steve, noting that the FNFP has worked with many of New Brunswick's Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Nations.

In implementing the ASEP-NB's mandate, Steve will draw on his experience with several previous forestry projects. For example, in 2003, he helped lead a major review of the Eel Ground community forest management plan, which was also supported by the FNFP.

TOTAL FUNDING	
FNFP Funds	$280,000
First Nations Funds	$940,000
Other Funds	$3,480,000
Total	**$4,700,000**

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